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THE

# LONDON READER

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[EVEN AS REX VERREKER LOOKED, A WHITE FIGURE EMERGED INTO THE CORRIDOR—A WHITE FIGURE WITH WILD DESPAIRING EYES.]

## THE HEIRESS OF BEAUDESERT.

### CHAPTER VII.

WHAT DID IT COME FROM?

CONSTERNATION spread through the whole county of Blankshire when it was announced in the local journal that the Lady Valerie de Montfort, only daughter of the Earl of Beaude-  
sart, was at death's door.

Carriage after carriage drove up to the Castle full of anxious inquirers after the heiress of Beaudekert's health, and nearly all went away in sorrow and dismay to find that the report was no worse than the truth; for the widower's only child—the one sunbeam of his shadowed life—was stricken down by a terrible fever of the brain.

"Brain-fever!" exclaimed the Marchioness of Daintree, "Why, the child has never had a case in her life! These country practitioners always like to have a grand name for every disease. I daresay it is nothing worse than

an attack of measles, caught from a child the other night. In my time it was not considered the proper thing for the mistress of the house, on the night of a ball to pass half the night in the garden!"

"I should have seen no harm in it," objected her son, "if she had allowed me to be her companion."

Then he pulled his straw-coloured moustaches and sauntered off to the stables to have a look at his horses, wondering if Flossie Springgold meant what she said when she told him that strength, and not beauty, was the quality she most admired in a man, and thinking every now and then, with a touch of pity, of the gentle girl with the wistful eyes, who had dared to prefer a simple commoner to a marquis with a rent-roll of half-a-million.

It was always the case—those whom he most admired would have nothing to say to him, whilst those whom he appreciated less had too much.

Nature had given him a short ungainly form, a plain face, and a heart that was worth its weight in gold.

Flossie Springgold would be content to take possession of it for the sake of those princely revenues, but she would be sure to do her best to break it, being totally unable to guess its real value.

Even now, as she lay in a graceful attitude on the sofa in her little boudoir at Soarsdale Park, waiting for Rex Verreker to keep his promise, she was wondering what her father, Colonel Springgold, would say to the idea of his little daughter carrying off the best match in the county.

What a triumph she would have over all her girlish contemporaries! One had married a country doctor, and settled down contentedly into insignificance; another thought herself quite a swell because her husband was a Baronet, and a third had thrown out hints that one day, not very far distant, there was every chance of her becoming a Viscountess.

As Marchioness of Daintree she would far outshine them all, and anyone of them would be delighted, in spite of past flirtations, to call her her dearest friend.

She lay back on the cushion, her pale gold hair contrasting well with the dark blue

velvet, and fancied herself in a long train of satin and lace, with a plume of feathers and a diamond coronet, outshining all the other ladies at the Queen's drawing-room, or else standing in one of the beautiful reception-rooms at Daintree Hall, with the Marquis by her side, and a crowd of brilliant guests passing before her.

Her heart throbbed with excitement and gratified vanity, but the next moment her eye fell on the dancing-card lying on her lap. She saw the R. V. inscribed in a well-known hand against one of the best waltzes, and she knew that in spite of riches and splendour she would never have any happiness unless both were shared by Rex Verreker. And the faithless creature had forgotten his promise!

No doubt he was flirting with that precious little fool, Lady Valerie, a girl who had countless advantages, and did not know how to make use of one of them. She had lovely eyes, but had not learnt their power; she had a position as high as anyone else's in the whole county, yet she made her friends amongst the most insignificant people around her; she had exquisite jewels, and left them in her dressing-case.

"Poor child!" she said to herself, with a curling lip; "she is so absurdly innocent. I can't think what Rex can find to say to her. If he ventured to talk as he does to me I fancy those large eyes would open, and the conversation collapse. I wish the watch would come, and not keep me waiting all the afternoon."

The door opened, and she looked up with eager eyes; but instead of her own particular friend, her father came in, with a very grave face.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed, in alarm. "Nothing wrong with the horses?"

"No, they're all right," with a slight smile, for he knew his daughter's weakness; "but I've been shocked to hear that Lady Valerie is seriously ill."

"Ill! nonsense. I suppose she danced herself into a headache on Tuesday night. I don't believe she was ever at a ball before."

"It's much worse than that. A sharp attack of brain-fever, and they've telegraphed for Sir Timothy Drew from London."

"Good gracious!" sitting bolt upright. "I thought brain-fever generally came from something."

"Yes, over-work or a shock; but there could have been neither in this case."

"How did you hear it?"

"From Winter, at the Bench. He was quite upset; it seems the poor girl is a great favourite of his."

"I know she is; at least, she is ridiculously fond of him. I must go to Beaudesert at once."

"Why should you go yourself? I can send one of the grooms with a note. Beaudesert won't see you, and the old lady will be too busy."

"I must go. I wouldn't stay away for the world. If I were ill I am sure you would expect the whole county to flock to the doors."

"If they came I should wish them at Jericho," drawing her affectionately to him. "Poor Beaudesert! He has nothing but this one little girl, and if anything happens to her what will become of him?"

"But nothing will—nothing can; it would be too dreadful. Order Blaebell, there's a good old dad, whilst I go and put on my habit."

"But you will be late for dinner!" objected the Colonel, who was the very soul of punctuality.

"I will ride at a pace."

"And put yourself in a fever, and your horse as well. No, no; I'll put off the dinner for half-an-hour, but don't keep me waiting."

Flossie knew how to be quick when she had a reason for speed, and in not more than a quarter of an hour she was riding away from home at a smart trot, followed by a groom—a trim little figure on her spirited bay mare, the sun shining on the plaits of her yellow hair.

The summer was in all its glory, the golden corn ripening with full promise for the harvest, the roses blooming in every cottage-garden, and there was an air of peace and plenty wherever her eyes chanced to wander.

Before long she entered one of the park-gates, and proceeding along the banks of the Wylie admired the lovely scenery on either side.

Never had Beaudesert looked more beautiful than now, with the long shadows of evening cast across the rippling water, and the silvery leaves of the beeches shining in the sun. Up the slopes by the private road, where the trees met overhead and the sunbeams seemed to be playing at bo-peep, slowly up the steep path, till she emerged on the broad gravel sweep in front of the grand portico.

The doors were wide open, but there was a hushed look about the massive building, which had a sobering effect on Flossie's spirits, and made her sink her voice to a whisper, as the footman, stationed in the hall to answer inquiries, came forward to receive her messages.

The report was nearly as bad as it could be. The doctor had arrived from London, and had a consultation with the local practitioner. The remedies he prescribed had had but little effect, and the fever was very high.

Just as Flossie was wondering if there were anything more to ask Verreker crossed the hall. Her heart gave a bound, and she made a sign to him with her riding-whip.

He came out to her, looking as pale and haggard as if he had been sitting up for nights and days, and she thought of how she had been expecting him to walk into her boudoir, and laugh and talk nonsense all the afternoon.

He did not look much like talking nonsense now, as he shook hands without a smile, and waited in a listless manner to be questioned.

Flossie, thoroughly taken aback, became laconic.

"Awful, isn't it?"

"Yes, bad for the Earl, poor fellow."

"But she will be better to-morrow?"

"I hope so."

"But you think so?" her blue eyes raised to his in anxious questioning.

"How can I tell?" almost fiercely.

"But what brought it on?"

He hesitated, and looked engrossed with a buckle of the reins, whilst she watched him with growing curiosity.

"It was her first ball, you know, and the excitement, or something, was too much for her."

"Something was too much for her," she repeated, quietly, but looking him straight in the face. "Of course you had nothing to do with it?"

"Of course not," shortly. "I never was of enough importance to send a woman into a fever about me."

"Then who did?"

"Who? Why should it be anyone?" with an angry flush. "This kind of thing often happens without a reason—even doctors are puzzled to find a cause."

"And what do the doctors say it came from?" her curiosity for the moment overpowering her compassion.

"They are content to do their best to cure it, without bothering themselves about the why or the wherefore."

"If I were her father I should bother myself a good deal; but don't look so angry; I am sure I meant no harm," with a sudden change of manner. "I don't know what the time is. I was so shocked that I came off without thinking of it."

"Time?" drawing out his watch; "half-past six. You will be late for dinner."

"I don't care if I am," with a pout, because she saw that he was anxious to get rid of her.

"Let me know if there is anything on earth I can do for them."

"You are very kind."

"Don't thank me in that formal manner."

"Is anyone staying here besides yourself?"

"Yes—Marshall."

"Good gracious! I didn't know he was a particular friend."

"No more he is; but he thought it better."

"Why better? He can only be in the way."

"He takes care to be no nuisance to anyone but himself."

"But why should he do it?" with a puzzled air. "It must be a nuisance for himself."

"If so, he doesn't say it."

"I suppose it is no use to ask you over to Soarsdale?" looking down at him with her sweetest smile.

"No, I daren't go away. The Earl might want me."

"I should have thought he was the sort of man to shut himself up when he was unhappy."

"So he is; but he might like to know there was a friend the other side of the door."

"Well, good-bye. I shall send over the first thing to-morrow. Perhaps you will be kind enough to send a message yourself, as I do not care to trust to a report from a servant."

Rex Verreker said "Certainly," and she rode away dissatisfied with him and with everyone else, only consoled by the knowledge that she was on the track of a mystery; and if Valerie de Montfort would only be kind enough to recover there might be some pleasure in unmasking it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"SAVE ME!"

"SAVE ME! SAVE ME! SAVE ME!"

The young voice rang all down the corridor in shrill accents of terror, and each word seemed to drive a knife through Rex Verreker's heart.

If the delusion could only be conquered there might be some hope for her life, but unless something could be done to calm her excited brain the doctors had little or no hope. His own bedroom was in the west wing of the castle, but it was so far removed from Lady Valerie's suite of rooms that he felt as if anything might happen without his knowing it till long after, so he spent but a short time in it.

Most of the night he passed pacing restlessly up and down the corridor outside her door, unable to tear himself away. He felt that nothing he could do in her service was too much, for if he had never left her on that fatal quest for a glass of water Colonel Darrell would never have been able to lure her into the garden, and all this misery would have been spared—reasoning, in his mad regret, as if chance, and not Providence, ruled the course of our lives.

The Earl had been banished, sorely against his will, from his daughter's room, for his presence seemed to increase her excitement, but he came constantly to inquire at her door, and got little rest either day or night.

He looked so ill that Verreker was afraid he would break down, and at last prevailed on him to go to bed, on the promise that he would remain on guard meanwhile, and call him directly if he were wanted.

A horse was kept ready saddled in the stables, and a groom was sitting up somewhere downstairs, so that the doctor might be sent for at any hour without delay.

Miss Beck and one nurse were in Lady Valerie's room; the other had gone to take her much-needed rest, and the whole house, except for that incessant, unwearied voice, which rose and fell in shrill monotony, was still as death. Even the large clock in the hall had been stopped lest in striking the hours a fitful slumber might have been broken.

It was a week from the night of the ball, and to Rex Verreker it seemed at least as if a year at least had passed since the moment when his host's only daughter had come forward to greet him, and appeared to him the embodi-



ment of everything that was lovely on earth.

In an instant Floreie Springgold had lost her charm, and he felt it in him to do or dare anything to win such a prize for himself—only it was out of reach. Alas, when we long for the fruit on the topmost bough (for nothing else is likely to content us)! Some men are able to make a ladder out of their wishes, and so win to the dizzyest heights, whilst others fall and fail; but Verreker, although he had pluck enough for half a dozen, had a noble disregard for his own merits, and was apt to fancy himself not worthy of that highest place.

Perhaps it was pride and not humility which made him forbear to put himself forward, but Nature had taken care to give him a charm which few could withstand, and an aristocratic appearance and lofty stature which made him conspicuous in any assembly.

He certainly looked fit to be the husband of an Earl's daughter as he leant against the wall in anxious thought, listening with a frown of pain to the oft-repeated cry which told him that Darrell was still haunting Valerie's fevered dreams.

"If I could only break the spell!" he groaned, and the next moment started violently, for the nurse had come quite close to him without his noticing her.

She smiled, and said, in a low voice:—

"I am only going downstairs to fetch some more ice; the rest is all melted."

"Any change?" he asked, eagerly.

"Not any, sir. She can't get a moment's rest for this idea that she has got into her head that somebody is always calling her. It will be the death of her if it goes on much longer," she added, mournfully.

He shrugged his shoulders despairingly, and the nurse went on down the passage, and disappeared round the corner out of sight.

Suddenly the cry from the sick room ceased, and there was a hush so deep and so unbroken that he could hear distinctly the ticking of his own watch in his waistcoat-pocket.

A feeling of nervous dread came over him, such as he had never known before. It was as if Death had already come on stealthy wings, and hope was dead.

His heart stopped still, the blood rushed to his face. Could it be that all was over, and there was nothing left to pray for? He went towards the door of the sick-room, drawn by an irresistible impulse, feeling sure that if the lock had really come Miss Beck would throw it open with a scared face.

Even as he looked at it it *did* open, and a white figure emerged into the corridor—a white figure, with a crest of close cropped curls, and wild, despairing eyes.

He hovered for a moment on the threshold, and then came swiftly towards him with bare feet which scarcely seemed to touch the floor.

Spell-bound he stood still, scarcely believing the evidence of his own senses, almost ready to faint, in sickly dread, that it was Lady Valerie's spirit come to warn him that he would see her no more.

He watched with distended eyes and parted lips, his heart thundering in his ears; and there, as the light figure tottered and reeled against the wall, he knew that it was no vision, but Valerie herself, and springing forward, was just in time to save her from falling head foremost on the carpet.

Out to feel that small brown head resting on his throbbing heart sent the blood coursing wildly through his veins; but fear—the ghastly fear of what might follow—cast a chill over his ecstasy, as he raised her gently in his arms, and saw that her eyes were closed, and even her lips were white.

"Oh, Heaven! she must not die!—not yet!—not now, in the flower of her youth, when love was striving so hard to hold her back! Heaven could not be so unjust, so cruel, when man would have more compassion. He held her close against his chest, and felt the quiver-

ing in every limb, as he carried her down the corridor to the shelter of her own room.

He pushed the door wide open with his foot, and saw, by the dim flicker of a night-light, Miss Beck, with a wonderful erection on her head, fallen fast asleep in an armchair. The poor old lady was quite exhausted, and sleep had evidently come over her against her will.

Now she started up, on seeing a young man stooping over the bed; but when Verreker, in a hurried whisper, explained what had passed, she was ready to sink into the ground in penitence for her own negligence.

Valerie lay back on the pillow, deathly pale, the only sign of life that constant quivering of every limb. Miss Beck, unable to restrain herself, wrung her hands, and sobbed aloud,—

"She's dying—she's dying, and it is I who have killed her!"

"Hush!" said Verreker, sternly. "Some brandy, quick!"

"Brandy!" in astonishment.

"Yes, it is the only hope—she's sinking!"

Miss Beck poured some spirit into a glass with a trembling hand and gave it to him. He held it to Valerie's lips, knowing that it was the only thing that could bring her back to life, and thankful to think she was allowed to have it from his hand.

"Now send for the doctor, and call her father."

Miss Beck obediently rang the bell twice, which was the signal agreed on for the man downstairs, and then, catching up a shawl—for even at such a moment the old maid could not forget that she was somewhat *en deshabille*—ran trampling down the passage, afraid of leaving her precious charge for a moment.

The Earl, whose anxious ears had caught the sound of the bell, was standing at the door of his dressing-room, with a loose wrapper hastily thrown round him.

"What is it? Is she worse?"

"Yes," sobbing hysterically, "and it's all my fault!"

Lord Beaudesert laid his hand kindly on her shoulder, as if to assure her that he could not believe it, and hurried on with stern, set face, whilst Miss Beck followed, wringing her hands.

"My child, my only child!"—the words kept ringing through his brain. "Would to Heaven I could die for thee—my child—my child!"

He forgot to be surprised to see Verreker in the room, for he had but space for the one thought—could she be saved? His heart turned to stone, as he saw the white face, resting in utter helpless weakness on the embroidered pillow. His lip trembled, as he bowed his head in agonised prayer, then laid his hand gently on the soft, white brow. Instantly she moved her head uneasily, and a murmur came from her lips.

"What did she say?" appealing in a husky whisper to Verreker.

"I am coming!"

The Earl frowned.

"The old delusion—can nothing be done to cure it?" he asked, hopelessly.

The nurses looked at one another, and shook their heads; Miss Beck gave a deep, despairing sigh, whilst Verreker, with a look of sudden resolution, went softly from the room.

The morning light, grey and ghostly, was stealing through the chinks of every shuttered window, as he made his way through corridor and gallery to the west wing, where male guests were generally quartered, when staying at Beaudesert.

Lord Marshall was enjoying the calm, unbroken repose of a selfish placid nature, when Verreker took him by the shoulder and shook him ruthlessly out of his pleasant slumbers.

"What on earth is the matter?" rubbing his eyes. "I was having such a jolly dream."

"Lady Valerie is worse," said Verreker, almost fiercely.

"Ah! I'm very sorry. She was as bad as she could be when I turned in," with a pro-

longed yawn, which said as plainly as possible, "you needn't have woken me up to tell me so." "I suppose there's nothing to be done," he added aloud. "There are plenty of grooms to fetch the doctor."

"There is something to be done, and I want you to do it," said Verreker quickly. "This delusion about Darrell is—*is* killing her," his voice growing hoarse. "It dragged her out of bed just now, and she can't get any rest for thinking that he's calling her. We can't save her unless it can be conquered."

"Awfully sorry, but I know nothing about mesmerism and that sort of thing, so it's no good appealing to me," looking as if he were on the point of turning over, with sleepy eyes ready to close the moment they were allowed to.

"You are the only man who can help us," said Rex, impatiently, his own vivid interest making no allowance for the other's seeming callousness. "You know where Darrell is. Get him to leave England at once. It is our only chance!"

"Deuced easy, if he's inclined to stop!" indulging in a stretch.

"But, if I'm not mistaken, you have a hold on him."

"I never said so; but if I had, Darrell's not the sort of man to funk!"

"I know you can make him if you will."

"I'm not so sure as you are, but I'll see what I can do after breakfast," resetting his pillow as a hint that he had not yet finished his night's rest.

"If it is to do any good you must go at once," said Verreker, relentlessly, chafing at every moment of delay.

"The devil!" ejaculated Lord Marshall, dolorously.

"Whilst you get into your things I'll order your horse."

"You are very good," with a certain acidity of manner.

"Good heavens! do you object to getting up two or three hours earlier than usual when it is to save a girl's life?" exclaimed Rex, vehemently.

"Not at all. I—I—enjoy it. I'm awfully glad to do it," in a hurry. "Just ring the bell for my man. I say—calling after him as he was going out of the room—'don't you think you had better come too?'"

It was dreadful to Rex to leave the house at that moment; but, after all, he could not expect to be admitted a second time to the sick-room, and if the Viscount wished for him he was bound to go.

"If you want me," he said, slowly.

"I think it would be as well," said Marshall, brightening. "Darrell might cut up rusty, you know, and he's not a fellow to be trifled with! You needn't show, but I should like to know that you were at hand."

## CHAPTER IX.

### RENOUNCED!

THE doctor had already arrived before the two young men left the house; and Verreker, hurrying along the corridor for a last report, met him coming out of the sick-room with the Earl of Beaudesert.

"We might save her yet," said Dr. Merton, "if she could get any rest; but she cannot sleep whilst this delusion lasts, and I am afraid she has not the strength to conquer it."

"If it were that she wanted anyone," said the Earl, sadly, "I would send for him, no matter who it was."

"It is not that. She fancies that someone is always calling her, and she must go to him. The only person she calls for or seems to wish to see," lowering his voice, "has a peculiar name—short, and ending in x."

"Ah, that's Verreker, the man who has just left us. There is no attachment between them—nothing of the sort; but he's a nice young fellow, who would do anything for people in trouble."

"I know a good many people who would

not grudge any amount of trouble for your daughter," said the doctor, with a half smile. "Do you think we had better telegraph for Drew?"

"Yes; I should like him to be here, though I am not at all sure that he can do any good. The issue lies in other hands than ours."

"It seems to me strange that no narcotic can be found to take any effect."

"In this case, opium, morphia, and all the rest are powerless, for the delusion is stronger than the medicine. It seems to me that there is something behind the scenes," fixing his eyes on the Earl's troubled countenance. "I don't wish to force your confidence, but I have an idea that if you would give it me I might be of more use."

Lord Beaudesert frowned, as he answered haughtily, "I have no confidence to give. My daughter you have known from her babyhood, and she has been under Miss Beck's care ever since. Her friends are mine, and there is not one amongst them in whom she takes a special interest."

How could he tell to this kindly, gossiping, doctor that his own pure-hearted Valerie had followed a stranger through the darkness till she was found close to the railway-station? How could he make her innocence a theme for all the evil tongues of the county? There was a mystery in it all which he could not fathom; but that his child was pure from any evil purpose in her strange disappearance on the night of the ball he was as certain as that he was possessor of Beaudesert, but it might not be so easy to prove it to anyone else.

Dr. Merton felt himself snubbed, and retired into grave silence, sitting down at a table in the library to write another prescription, whilst the Earl dashed off a telegram to Sir Timothy Drew, the well-known London physician.

Whilst the father was clinging to hope against the evidences of his own eyes, Lord Marshall and Rex Verreker were riding through all the beauty of the summer's morning to the gloomy abode where they hoped to find Colonel Darrell.

Ivora Keep was approached by a long straight road leading through the heart of the forest of Belton. The strip of grass on either side of the road was bright with many-coloured wild flowers; the birds were singing amongst the drooping branches, and bees were hovering from one dew-tipped blossom to another. It was a morning to fill any breast with thankfulness for the mere gift of life; but Verreker's heart, oppressed with its weight of sorrow, sank all the lower because of the contrast between his own dismal thoughts and the universal brightness around. Lord Marshall was not susceptible to the beauties of nature (except when exemplified by a beautiful woman), and any talk about them he contemptuously designated as "sentimental rubbish."

He was at present much occupied by thinking over his approaching interview with Colonel Darrell, the prospect of which did not afford him any satisfaction. The ex-colonel of the 17th Lancers was not a pleasant person to have a quarrel with; and in his heart of hearts Marshall was afraid of being turned into ridicule for believing that anyone, at a distance of about twelve miles, could influence a girl lying on a sick-bed, and perfectly unconscious of her surroundings.

"Here we are!" he said, as cheerfully as he could, as they stopped in front of a stone archway and an iron gate. "I expect we shall have to knock for half-an-hour, for no one seems to be stirring."

"I have no intention of calling upon Colonel Darrell, so I shall wait outside; but remember to be as quick as you can."

"But, I say, if I want you, you will never hear me."

"Whistle to me out of any of the windows and I'll come to you at once."

"Yes, when it was too late. Hulloa, here comes Darrell himself, looking as spick-and-span as if he had been up for the last-hour."

Verreker turned his horse's head, and re-

tired into the forest, although he felt much more inclined to rush at Darrell's throat; whilst Marshall went forward with a bland smile as the gate rolled back on its hinges.

"Surprised to see me, no doubt?" he began, with a laugh.

"Not in the least," said Colonel Darrell, quietly. "I've been expecting you."

"But not at this unearthly hour?" as he swung himself down from his horse.

"Why not? I've been up ever since half-past two."

Instantly it flashed through Lord Marshall's mind that he had been told it was half-past two when Lady Valerie rose up from her sick-bed, and his errand immediately became of more importance.

"Come into my own den; it is the only place that is comfortable."

He led the way to a room in a castellated tower, which was strewn with books and papers.

The window was opened which looked towards the west. Darrell pointed to a clump of trees on the horizon, and said, with a significant glance,—

"There is Beaudesert. They've been stirring early this morning."

"Perhaps you can tell me what I've come for?" said Lord Marshall, banteringly.

"Certainly I can. That poor girl is at death's door, and gave you all a fright at half-past two by jumping out of her bed."

"How the deuce did you know that?" staring at his host in vacant astonishment.

Colonel Darrell smiled grimly, but said nothing.

"All I can suppose is that you pay somebody to give you an account of what goes on at Beaudesert," said Lord Marshall, recovering his common-sense, and irritated because he thought his friend was actually trying to dupe him.

"Much obliged for the insinuation!"—throwing back his head haughtily; "but I keep no spies!"

"Spies! No, of course not. I was only joking. Now look here, Darrell," his face growing very red, "if you've got the heart of a man you will leave that poor girl alone!"

Darrell frowned.

"If I hadn't a heart I would give her up at once; but I have!" striking the table with his fist, "and I can't."

"Do you wish for a corpse, because that's all you will get?" he said, roughly. "She's dying by inches!"

"I know it," gloomily; "but if she lives they'll give her to someone else."

"You can't be such a brute as to wish to kill her?" bursting out in righteous indignation.

No answer.

"They've got an idea in their heads that if you went out of England she might get rid of her delusions. Will you go?"

"No, nothing shall induce me!" with stern resolution.

Lord Marshall rose from his seat.

"You must. If the girl's life depends upon it I shall make you!"

"You!" with a glance of withering contempt. Then he hurried to the window and leant out, with a rapt expression on his face.

"Don't you hear her? She's calling me. Valerie! Valerie! Come!"

"No! My ears are not quite long enough," said Marshall, drily; "but if, by any sort of conjuring stuff, that poor girl can hear you I won't stand by and hear her tortured. You must give her up, or else——" his voice sank to an impressive whisper, and Darrell's face grew livid.

"You would turn sneak?" he hissed out between his teeth.

"I would do anything to save her!" Marshall answered, doggedly.

"Do you know that I could throw you out of the window and break your neck?" in sudden fury.

"Yes; but Verreker's waiting down below, and he would see you didn't escape the rope."

The two men exchanged furious glances, and the Viscount's were as fierce as Darrell's, for a conviction had gradually been forced upon him that Valerie de Montfort's life actually lay in this man's hands, and the thought gave him courage to face anything.

"Look here, Marshall, if I give her up now I may lose her for ever," he said, in a changed voice.

"I can't answer for that, but all I know is that if she doesn't get any rest she will be dead before we get back, and if you can save her you must!"

Darrell passed his hand over his face, and then, with a heavy sigh, walked slowly back to the window.

"She is sinking fast; her voice is so low that I can scarcely hear it. Well, if I can save her I will." He leant out as far as he could, his face strangely agitated, and said clearly and distinctly, "Valerie, good-bye. I am leaving you!"

Then he sank down on his knees, resting his elbows on the sill and his head on his arms, and so Lord Marshall left him.

In hot haste Verreker and Marshall rode back to Beaudesert, not knowing if the news would be death or life.

(To be continued.)

It is when we come to rejoice in duty, to take pleasure in sacrifice, to follow justice, mercy, and truth, not only with the firm and steady step, but with a loving and tender clasp, that we realise the true vitality of righteousness.

FAMILY TIES.—The majority of young girls marry a man with a vague idea that they are going to endure no interference from his family. From the first they are on the aggressive. They positively hate the idea of a mother-in-law and make up their minds beforehand that they won't stand any bossing, before they have tried to find out whether that mother-in-law is a nice person or not. Did it ever occur to such that your own mother, whom you dearly love, and whom you think so kind and good, is really a disagreeable mother-in-law to your brother's wife? You get indignant at the proposition, but whenever you think of his mother as a person to be disliked, just think of your own sweet silver-haired mother at home and wonder to yourself how anyone could hate her. Married life has its duties as well as its privileges, and one of the chief duties is to be able to get along pleasantly with your husband's family, so that instead of really losing their son they are in reality gaining a daughter. Perhaps it is not always easy to do, as no doubt in some cases the new relatives do not look with favour upon you, and do everything in their power to make life unbearable. Even in that case do what you can to conciliate them, and if you fail you have done what you could. Such cases are extremely rare, however, and you often hear Mrs. So-and-So speaking with pride of the beauty, ability, or some other good quality of her daughter-in-law. Of course the husband ought to return the compliment; and if he sees you taking the initiative he will follow most cheerfully in the ways your feet are treading. It is such a delightful thing for all the families on both sides to be on pleasant terms, and so much better for the young couple. There have been some wives, who, by coldness or in some other manner, have completely estranged their husband from their families; and although their better halves have made no visible protest, still, if one could search their innermost thoughts, they would wish that it were different. So, young wives, do not try to separate your husband from his mother, but join in with him in showing her respect and affection, and you will find that it will come back to you a hundredfold from his folks and from him; and you will live a happier and more peaceful life in consequence.



## THE FAIR ELAINE.

## CHAPTER LIV.

## HOMEWARD BOUND.

"Did you climb those crags?" Wil Hamilton cried, astonished.

She shrugged her pretty shoulders, while her lips curved a trifle.

"The chamois is not more sure-footed than Mimosa," she said briefly.

"Do you love flowers?" Wil asked, with a growing interest in her.

The quick colour flashed over her face like a glow of light.

"They are the smiles of the Great Spirit," she said, reverentially, while her eyes rested fondly upon the gay colours in his hand.

"You do love them, or you never would have said that," Wil returned, earnestly, and deeply touched by the pretty simile; "and so do I. I am very thankful to you for thinking of me in my loneliness. But I have nothing to give you in return, unless you will let me choose one of these for you to wear as a token of my gratitude."

"To wear?" she repeated, blankly, not comprehending his meaning at all.

"Yes. In my country, when a gentleman gives a lady a flower, if she cares anything for it, she pins it at her throat, or wears it in her belt. Here is this beautiful scarlet bell, which I will choose for you, as my thank-offering for the bouquet."

He held it out to her as he spoke, and she advanced shyly to take it, her eyes glowing, and the rich colour sweeping up to her forehead as her fingers touched his in the act.

"I should be glad if you could come to see me again, Mimosa," Wil said, as she was turning, without a word, to leave him.

"Mimosa has seen the pale-face often, but he knew it not; he was sleeping, and the braves were on the trail," she returned, thus indicating that it was only by stealth that she dared approach his wigwam.

Then turning, she disappeared, like some bright bird, and the place seemed even more gloomy than before to its sad-hearted occupant.

Every day after Mimosa's brief visit to him Wil received a lovely bouquet of flowers. Sometimes they were thrust just inside his curtains by a small, delicately-formed hand, which quickly disappeared again like a frightened bird; sometimes they were laid upon his pillow where he would find them on his return from a walk, or they would be dropped in the very path at his feet from some invisible source above.

But he was at no loss to know to whom he was indebted for these choice floral offerings, although it was long before he had another opportunity to converse with the chieftain's beautiful daughter.

Now and then he caught a glimpse of her as she passed to and fro about her duties, or mingled with the other maidens of the camp; and once or twice, when he ventured near a group of which she formed the centre, and met the glance of her dark, bright eyes, he marked the sudden flash which leaped into them, and the vivid flush which burned upon her cheeks.

Not having any opportunity to thank her for her thoughtful attentions, he could think of no other way to evince his appreciation than to wear her colours, so he would often tuck one of her bright flowers in his button-hole, and wear it until it drooped and faded.

Now and then he would find a small basket of fruit in his tent—berries of various kinds; and one day he discovered upon his couch an exquisite belt of wampum, which he did not doubt had been wrought by the dainty fingers of the chieftain's daughter.

Four months had passed since his captivity began, and he was able now to walk without a crutch, using only a stout stick to favour his weaker limb.

He was well and strong in every other respect, and he began to have some desperate idea of taking matters into his own hands and strive to get away from the wilderness and his uncongenial companions.

With this in view he often went out to sit with the braves around the council fires, and though he could not understand a word of their language, he could sometimes gather something of their meaning from their glance and gestures.

In this way he was now brought in frequent contact with Mimosa, as the maidens were often called to wait upon the braves, and she was always eager to be among them.

Occasionally she would stop in an off-hand manner near Wil, and speak a low word or two to him, and he could not fail to see that she entertained the kindest of feelings towards him.

"Perhaps," he thought, after one of these brief interviews with her, "I may be able to persuade her to assist me to escape."

One evening, after an excessively warm and sultry day, the men, instead of gathering in their usual circle, threw themselves about anywhere where they could find the coolest spot of ground, while beneath a stately forest tree a knot of gay maidens had gathered to chat in the growing dusk.

Wil was very restless, and oh! so bitterly homesick. He could neither sit nor lie anywhere quietly, but paced back and forth in the open space before the wigwams, extending his walk a little farther every time he turned.

He had put a bright cardinal flower in his button-hole before leaving his tent, hoping thus to attract Mimosa's attention; for he had resolved to obtain an interview with her before he slept, if possible, and put her regard for him to a test.

It was not long before he espied her sitting by herself just a little apart from the group of girls before mentioned.

Little by little he extended his paces in that direction, until he passed the spot where she sat twice, and without appearing to notice that she was there.

He turned the third time, and just as he came opposite her the cardinal flower that he had worn dropped just at her feet. He stooped to pick it up, and said, in a low, appealing tone:

"Will Mimosa come to the back of the tent by-and-by? I have a few words to say to her."

She did not even look up at him as she briefly answered,—

"Yes, pale-face, she will come."

The closest observer would not have mistrusted that they had spoken to each other. He had, to all appearance, dropped a flower, stooped an instant to recover it, and then passed on.

Once or twice he paced back and forth again, then, yawning wearily, he leisurely sauntered away to his tent.

Mimosa watched him from beneath her dusky lashes, but not a movement betrayed that she was in any way interested in his actions, and, after he had disappeared, her head gradually sank forward until it almost rested upon her bosom, while her body swayed back and forth as if overcome with sleep.

A burst of merriment appeared suddenly to awake her, making her look up, to find several pairs of eyes mirthfully regarding her, and the young girls gathering about her began to banter her upon her drowsiness at that early hour of the evening.

This, as she had intended, gave her an excuse for retiring, and, raising, she made some laughing rejoinder, and then ran lightly away to her own wigwam.

Half-an-hour later Wil heard a gentle scratching on the cloth of his tent just by his pillow.

"Mimosa," he whispered.

"Let the pale-face speak, Mimosa will listen," came in a low, sweet tone to him.

"Mimosa, why do your people hold me a captive here?" he asked.

"Is not the pale-face kindly treated?"

"Yes, but I long for my own land and my own people."

Wil thought he heard a gentle sigh at this, but the next moment she answered, though her voice did not sound quite natural,—

"The pale-face would make a brave warrior; if he could be content, he might become a great chief by-and-by."

"No, no, that would be impossible," he returned, with an unseen gesture of disgust.

"Tell Mimosa why."

"Because—because. Listen, Mimosa; you have always been a child of the forest; you have been free and unfettered as a bird, and no other life would be possible for you, that is, you could not enjoy any other. How would you like it if someone should carry you away to a large city and shut you up in small, close rooms, never allowing you to go out, and where you could never get a breath of your native air, or see one of your own people?"

"Mimosa would die," she said, briefly; "her heart would break."

"Yes, that is it. I am in a strange, wild country, my liberty is taken from me, and my heart is breaking to go back to my friends and my country."

"The pale-face is a man, and the hearts of the brave do not break," the girl replied, with an accent of scorn.

"Perhaps not," he assented, with a flash at the implied weakness; "I might not die, but I am very unhappy to be detained here against my will."

Again he heard that sigh; then:

"Ah! if only the pale-face could be happy here, Mimosa would live but to serve him, and he should be a great chief."

There was a sadness and an earnestness in the sweet voice that thrilled her listener.

He started, as a thought flashed upon him.

Could it be possible that this beautiful Indian girl was learning to love him? and was that the secret of her past attentions to him, and of her wish for him to remain and become one of her people?

He hoped that such was not the case; at all events, he resolved to nip any such sentiments in the bud.

"That could never be," he said, gravely. "My heart is with my own people, and I must go back to them. Will you help me, Mimosa?"

Surely a sob smote his ear at this. He was not quite sure, but it was very like it. Then the girl said, in a passionate voice,—

"When the pale-face goes home, far across the sea, Mimosa dies!"

Her voice died away to a hoarse whisper at the last word.

It was as he had feared, after all. The mischief was done—the Indian maiden loved him, and for a moment he was speechless—appalled.

"Hush!" he said, at length: "you must not say that, for by-and-by some noble brave will ask to take you to his wigwam, and you will be very happy, while I—listen now, for this is a secret which I could not tell to every one—I must go back to England: for I love a beautiful, golden-haired maiden there, who, I fear, is even now mourning for me as dead. Now you see why I could not remain willingly with your people even were not this kind of life very distasteful to me. But, Mimosa, if you will assist me to get away, so that I can go back to those I love, I shall always remember you as a kind friend."

He listened and waited for some reply to this, but none came. At last he arose and looked out. There was no one there—the spot where Mimosa had knelt to talk with him was empty; she had stolen away as quietly as she had come, and he knew not what would be the result of his petition to her. So, with a sigh of disappointment and something of apprehension, he threw himself again upon his pile of robes, and was ere long asleep.

He scanned the faces of the warriors somewhat anxiously the next morning as he went

among them, and for several days after, but no one appeared any different to him: he was not more closely watched, and he began to think that if Mimosa did not mean to help him, she at least intended to keep his desire for escape a secret.

However, he was every day becoming more desperate, and resolved that he would improve the first opportunity that offered for his escape—take his life in his hand, and try to make his way to some white settlement.

But one morning he arose with a strange feeling of lassitude upon him, while sharp, stinging pains went shooting throughout his whole body. His tongue was parched and dry, his head dizzy, and a fear began to haunt him that he was going to be very ill.

Every moment he seemed to grow worse, and before he had finished dressing himself he was obliged to crawl back to his bed, where a messenger, sent to inquire into his absence from the morning meal, found him groaning with pain.

The doctor was summoned, and, upon seeing his patient, gave vent to a perfect torrent of dissatisfied grunts, and proceeded to put him through a thorough steaming process; but it was all of no avail, for every hour only added to poor Wil's torments, and before night he was unable to move, for he was bound hand and foot by the chains of that relentless demon—rheumatism.

It would be tedious to follow him through the long season of pain, and wretchedness of loneliness and almost despair. The disease seemed loth to relinquish its hold upon its victim, but his strong constitution at length conquered, and he began slowly to mend.

He had received the most devoted care, however, during this illness; for when the fever had passed, and his wandering mind returned to its normal condition, he found Mimosa established beside him as his nurse, and a very efficient one she proved, too, for every want and need were attended to almost before he was conscious of them himself, and with a gentleness and deftness that were very grateful to his weakened nerves.

But she was greatly changed; she was no longer the bright, happy maiden that she had been, when she had come so shyly to bring him her flowers.

Her cheeks had lost their roundness; her sparkling eyes had grown dull and sunken; her form seemed to have shrunk away, all its graceful outlines had disappeared, while she had a dry, hard cough, which racked her whole body with every paroxysm.

But she never complained—never spoke of herself, though there was a hopeless tenderness in her eyes, which smote Wil every time she looked at him, while she was so attentive and gentle that he began to feel a real affection for her.

But as his strength returned and his convalescence progressed rapidly, she did not come so often, while she seemed to have grown suddenly weak and spiritless herself.

Once she was absent several days, and upon inquiring of Arrow where she was, he replied in a tone that was almost fierce, and with a despairing look.

"Mimosa droops; she says the Great Spirit has called her."

"Surely she cannot be so ill as that!" Wil cried, greatly startled.

The Indian bowed his head upon his breast and did not answer; but Wil could see that his teeth had almost bitten through his lip in his effort to restrain all feeling, while his hands were clenched so tightly that they had become livid.

Tears actually started to the invalid's eyes; he could hardly believe that the beautiful girl was fatally ill; yet he remembered how hollow her cough had sounded the last time he saw her, and how, several times, she had been involuntarily put her hand to her side as if a sharp pain had suddenly pierced her.

Arrow soon recovered his composure, and then told him that Mimosa had been out in a

storm and taken a sudden cold; that during his illness she had had several slight hemorrhages, and only a day or two previous she had been attacked with one more violent than the others, and was now confined to her couch.

This made Wil very sad, for he had been greatly interested in the bright, intelligent maiden, and it seemed almost cruel that she must die so young.

Another week passed, and then she came again to see him, and he was shocked at the change which the past fortnight had wrought in her, though she did not appear nearly so sad as she had done the last time he saw her.

"I am sorry you have been sick, Mimosa," he said, holding out his hand in greeting to her.

She laid hers for a moment within it, and it almost burned with its fever heat.

"Mimosa will be better soon," she answered, quietly, as she sat down beside him.

Then fixing her dark eyes with a mournful look on his face, she asked, significantly,—

"Can the pale-face be patient a little longer?"

Wil's heart bounded into his throat at the question, for something told him she had devised a way for him to escape from his captors.

"How?—patient for what?" he asked, trying to speak calmly.

She held up her hand between him and the sunlight that poured in between the parted curtains of his tent, and he saw that it was almost transparent, and trembling from weakness.

"See!" she said, with a sad smile, "the life is almost gone; two moons will not wax and wane before it will be cold and still. When Mimosa's heart ceases to beat the pale-face shall be free."

"Mimosa! surely you do not think you are going to die!" Wil said, startled by her words, and in his anxiety for her, heedless for the moment of their fall import.

She smiled again a trifle bitterly.

"Does the pale-face care?"

"Truly I do," he said, earnestly. "I should grieve sorely."

"Will he remember the poor Indian girl when he goes back to the golden-haired squaw?"

"Indeed I shall. I shall never forget how kind you have been to me; nor that, perhaps, I owe my life to your faithful care."

Her lips trembled, and her eyes were dazzlingly bright as she leaned nearer to him, the hectic burning on her cheek:

"Mimosa has loved the pale-face well," she whispered—"so well that she will find a way to send him back to his people and the beautiful maiden who is grieving for him. But her heart is broken; there is no beauty in the hills or valleys any more for her—no joy in the flowers, in the whispering boughs and running waters; she longs for the happy hunting-grounds of the Great Spirit, who will make her well and lift the pain from her heart."

Wil Hamilton sighed heavily.

"You make me very unhappy, Mimosa," he said, in a husky voice. "I never intended you any wrong, my poor girl."

She lifted her head with a proud gesture at those last words.

"Pomanda's daughter can do without the pale-face's pity!" she said, haughtily.

Then a painful crimson swept over her wan face, and she added, sadly and humbly,—

"I know he meant no wrong; it is only poor, foolish Mimosa who has been wrong. There was no one among her father's people who had power to touch her heart; but when the pale-face came, with a brighter light in his eyes, with wisdom in his speech, with gracious words and gentle courtesy—so different from the rude ways of the men of the forest—the poor Indian girl was foolish enough to look up to him, to linger for his smile and the sound of his voice, and to tremble when he spoke pleasant words to her. She forgot that the eagle never mates with

the sparrow, until the pale-face told her of the beautiful, golden-haired squaw over the sea, and how his heart was full of bitterness because he could not return to her. But now he shall go back to her and his own people. Mimosa has sworn it, and she will perform her vow."

Wil was deeply moved as he listened to the dying girl; there was infinite tenderness in her low, sad tones, and every word was full of a pathos that was very touching.

"I shall be very grateful to you, Mimosa, but I should be much happier if you could get well and be happy yourself, after I am gone. I will hope that you may, at all events; but will you not tell me," he added, anxious to change the subject, "how you learned to speak my language so correctly?"

The girl flushed again, and with evident pleasure, while a glow of pride came into her eyes.

"Three summers ago Mimosa went to visit the tribe of Pomanda's brother, beyond the Red River of the North, and a pale sister with a voice like the nightingale's, and eyes like the meadow violet, came to teach the poorer men. Mimosa's heart was hungry to learn; she had always wanted more than her own people could give her, and she sat often at the feet of the pale sister who taught her the language of her fathers, and," hesitating, and casting a furtive glance at her companion, "and about the Great Father, and the good Christ who died for the white man, the red man, all people. Does the pale-face know Him?"

"Yes, Mimosa, I know that Christ died for every one," Wil answered, with a strange tension about his heart-strings.

"Does the pale-face love him?" she asked, with almost breathless eagerness.

His eyes drooped and a flush slowly mounted to his brow. He knew that he did not love Him, in the way that she meant, and he was speechless before her. Had he come into the wilderness to be taught the truths of the gospel by this simple girl?

A wistful look swept over her face; then she said,—

"Mimosa will search for the pale-face in the happy hunting-grounds by-and-by; she hopes that he will come to them, for she loves the good Christ, and will not be afraid to go away to them when he calls her; for she knows that there her heart will never be heavy any more."

She arose, her face all alight with hope, but it soon faded, and she continued, in a weak voice:

"Mimosa cannot come again to look upon the pale-face, for her spirit is weary and her feet are slow; but let him not lose his courage, for, when Mimosa's spirit is free, he shall be free also."

She stooped, and, with a suddenness for which he was wholly unprepared, pressed her burning lips to his for one instant, and then was gone.

He never saw her again; but he often inquired for her, and was told that she was falling and far too ill to leave her own wigwam.

Six weeks after that last and interview Arrow came one morning, a little after sunrise, to his tent, his face grey and stern, his brow gloomy and overcast.

"Let the pale-face make ready for the trail," he briefly commanded.

Wil looked at him inquiringly, but his heart was beating heavily with mingled hope and fear.

"The Great Spirit has called the flower of Pomanda's tribe to his happy hunting-grounds, and she will never make glad the hearts of her people any more. But the chief, my father, made a vow that when Mimosa ceased to breathe the pale face should be free. When the sun rose my sister was gone, and the chains of the captive broken. Come."

He turned abruptly and went out of the tent, while Wil, trembling in every limb at the glad tidings of his freedom, yet with tears of sadness gathering in his eyes at the untimely end



of the gentle Indian girl, made haste to equip himself for a long march.

As he passed out of his tent he found Arrow waiting for him. He made a gesture indicating that Wil was to follow him, and immediately plunged into a narrow path leading through the forest.

There was not a sound about the Indian camp, and ominous stillness seemed to hang like a pall over every wigwam, and not a person was visible anywhere.

As they passed a little open glade a short distance from the camp Wil saw a new-made grave.

Mimosa had been buried at sunrise.

Arrow covered his face with his blanket and went on, but Wil, breaking a bough from an aspen tree, moved forward and laid it reverently upon the narrow mound; then, with a sigh of regret for the dead, but with courage and hope once more animating both heart and body, he turned from the place for ever, and followed his guide.

For many days they marched eastward, the Indian and his silent, for his heart was heavy. Wil growing every hour more hopeful and eager.

They paused upon their journey only long enough to eat their simple meals and take peaceful rest, and at last, just as the sun was setting after a glorious day, Arrow halted upon a slight rise of ground and pointed toward a dusky vapour which was curling over the tops of some trees not far distant.

"There the pale-face will find friends," he said, briefly.

"Is there a white settlement there?" Wil asked.

The Indian nodded assent.

Joy shone in Wil Hamilton's eyes, and he trembled visibly.

It was very sweet after the long, weary months of his captivity to find himself at last so near to civilization and friends again.

"You will come with me and rest awhile before you resume your long march back, will you not?" he begged of Arrow, for he had grown thin and pale during their trying journey, eating but very little, and looking so sad that Wil's heart ached for him.

The Indian's lips grew tremulous, in spite of his forced stoicism, at the words of sympathy.

"The heart of Arrow is heavy," he said, sadly; "he will not rest until he comes again to the bed where Mimosa sleeps."

"But it is a long distance; you will be ill if you do not take proper rest and food," Wil returned.

His companion merely shrugged his shoulders in reply, and folded his blanket more closely about him as if impatient to be gone, and Wil saw that it would be useless to urge him, so all that remained for him to do was to take his leave of him.

"I thank you, Arrow," he said, "for your guidance during our hard journey, and I shall always remember your kindness to me. Of course, it has not been pleasant to be detained against my will among your people, but, perhaps, that was no fault of yours."

Again Arrow shrugged his shoulders.

"Pomanda knew that his daughter loved the pale-face, and he hoped to make a great warrior of him, that she might live and be happy," he answered.

"Was that the reason you have kept me so long?" Wil cried.

"Not at first," Arrow answered; "Pomanda loved the gleam of yellow gold, and he hoped to get it by keeping the pale-face; but when that hope was dead he began to see that Mimosa's face shone when the white man was near, and grew sad when he was away; then he said: 'The child of a great chief must be happy; we will make a brave of the pale-face and he shall take her to his wigwam, for she shall not droop and fade like a flower before the hour fret.' But Mimosa's face grew white, here it faint; the Great Spirit had whispered to her; she commanded that the pale-face be set free, and—the dying never see in vain."

Wil was deeply moved, but the day was fast

waning and he was anxious to reach the settlement before night, and he knew he must hasten.

He took his purse from his pocket; there was considerable coin, both gold and silver in it, and held it out to his companion.

"Take this to Pomanda," he said; "there is gold in it enough, I hope, to make him feel that I am not ungrateful."

But Arrow's eyes lighted with a sudden flash.

"Pomanda shall not have the white man's gold," he said, proudly; "he whom Mimosa loved shall not pay for the care her people gave him."

"Then take this for yourself, Arrow," Wil exclaimed, with an unsteady lip, while he drew a heavy gold ring from his finger, "and keep it as a token of my gratitude to you and your sister for all your kindness to me."

The Indian did not refuse, and allowed Wil to put it upon his finger, then drawing a small pouch from beneath his blanket, he thrust it hastily into the young man's hand, turned quickly away, dashed into the woods, and disappeared from sight.

Opening the pouch, Wil discovered, to his amazement, gems of various kind.

They were all in the rough, of course, but he knew enough of their formation to perceive that they bade fair to be of great value.

But there was no time then to examine them closely, and concealing them about his person, he set off at a brisk pace towards the settlement which Arrow had pointed out to him.

He found it without difficulty, and it proved to be merely a rude village; but he succeeded in obtaining a night's lodging; and the next morning, procuring a conveyance, proceeded to the nearest railway station, which was many miles distant, whence he started at once for New York.

Arriving there, he secured a passage upon the first steamer bound for England, and ere long was ploughing the seas toward his native land, as fast as steam and sail could take him.

## CHAPTER LV.

### "CAN IT BE TRUE?"

WE left Arley, after her meeting with Wil before the druggist's shop, in Lady Elaine's boudoir, whither she had been led by the gentle girl, agitated and almost unnerved in view of the astonishing news which she was about to communicate.

But with a resolute effort of her will, she suddenly rallied her sinking heart and bent herself to her task.

She would not allow Elaine to wait upon her, even though she appeared anxious to do so.

"I am perfectly able to take care of myself," she said, gravely, as she threw aside her wraps, and took off her hat; "you must not make yourself too useful to me, for you know I do not expect I can have you all the time, now that my liege lord has claimed me. But, dear, I have a particular request to make to you to-night."

"A request!" Lady Elaine repeated, smiling, and relieved to see Arley's colour coming back; "surely you would ask nothing amiss, and I may safely promise to grant it even before I know what it is."

"That is a dear—now mind, you have promised, and I shall not allow you to retract," Arley returned, archly.

"Well, I met a very dear friend, a gentleman, to-day, and he said that he should call at Mordaunt House to-night—"

"Philip?" interrupted Lady Elaine, with a merry glance at Arley's cheeks which were fast becoming crimson with excitement.

"I am not going to tell you who just yet," Arley answered, with a wise look; "but I want you to let me turn dressing-maid just for once, and array you as I like, then I will go and put on something bright and pretty to keep you company."

Lady Elaine grew pale, and a quiver ran through her whole body.

"Arley," she cried, in a voice of pain, "you are asking something very hard of me, for—I have worn nothing but this," with a pathetic glance down at the black dress, "since—since—"

"Yes, darling, I know, ever since those dreadful tidings of Wil came to you," Arley said, tenderly. "But," she continued, "do you suppose he would like to see you in such sombre robes all the time?"

"No," was the low reply, made with tremulous lips, "but—"

Arley would not allow her to go on.

"Neither do I, and as I am going to assume gay attire to-night, in honour of our visitor, I ask, as an especial favour, that you will do the same."

"But will it not appear very strange?" objected Lady Elaine, regarding Arley wonderingly.

"You will not think so when you know who is coming, and never mind if it does just for once, and it will please me so much. Do you remember the ball at Hazelmere, and have you the dress that you wore then?"

"Yes,"

"Where is it?"

"In a trunk in my wardrobe; but, Arley, I cannot wear that," Lady Elaine said, looking like a statue of snow, for the thought of it brought a flood of tender memories surging over her.

"Please, dear," Arley pleaded, earnestly, "I would not be cruel or wound you for the world, but I feel as if I must see you in it just once more—I will never ask you again to do anything of this kind, only grant me my request to-night."

Lady Elaine sighed, but she made no further objection, for she was always ready to sacrifice her own feelings for the sake of others. She thought it a strange caprice of Arley's, but she imagined that Philip must be the visitor whom she expected, and that in her joy at his home coming she wished every body to be gay.

Without further words Arley found and brought the lovely dress, and with nervous fingers helped her sister to put it on. Then she brought some soft, creamy lace from her own treasures and arranged it just as she remembered she had worn it about her neck that night at Hazelmere. She brought a cluster of small, pure lilies to fasten at her throat, when Lady Elaine started, and put them from her with a bitter sob.

"Lilies!" she cried, sharply, "Wil's own flowers, which you know are so sacred to me! Surely, Arley, this is not kind."

Arley bent and kissed her with trembling lips—her task was growing harder every moment; but Wil must not see her in black. "Dear," she whispered, "would it not be a joy to you to dress thus for him, if you could only imagine for once that you are dressing for Wil—"

"How could that be possible when I know he is dead; how can you have the heart to ask me to imagine anything like that?" she cried in a voice of agony.

"I know that they wrote that he was dead," Arley returned, with brilliant eyes, "but you know they never found him; and I have sometimes thought that there was a possibility that they were mistaken, after all."

"Oh, Arley! what strange spirit possesses you to-night? Are you so happy in the prospect of Philip's arrival that you forget how bruised and sore and denolate my poor heart is?" Lady Elaine cried, with something of passion in her voice.

"It is not like you," she went on, reproachfully. "I know that they never found his body," and an icy chill seemed to seize her here as she remembered how they had explained that; "but do you suppose if he had been living he would have remained away from me so long, without one word to relieve my suspense?"

"Not if he could have helped it, dear," said Arley, gently.

"What would have hindered him?"

"I can imagine several things."

"Such as what?"

"He might have been ill."

"He would have written, then; illness might have kept him from me, but it would never have kept him silent so long," muttered Lady Elaine, with unwavering faith.

"No, it would not if he could have got a letter to you, but I can imagine circumstances which might render that impossible. I can imagine—shall I tell you what?" Arley asked, with a strangely earnest face.

"Yes, tell me if you wish; but get through with your freak as soon as possible for my sake; you are in a very unaccountable mood to-night, Arley," was the weary reply.

Arley began, determined now to finish her story.

"Well, then, I can imagine that when Wil fell over that horrible precipice he might not have been killed—that a tree or something might have broken his fall, and that instead of being dragged by some wild beast to his lair, some Indians—for we have read that portions of North America are still inhabited by Indians—might have seen him fall, and, picking him up in their stealthy way, carried him away to their camp, where he might have been retained as a captive, in the hope of securing a reward or ransom for him."

"Arley, Arley!" the sweet voice rang out very sharply. "You have heard something—you are trying to prepare me for something—"

She gasped for breath and could not go on, for the suddenness of the thought almost paralysed her.

Arley gathered her close in her trembling arms, drew the golden head down upon her bosom, and with her lips against her cheek, whispered,—

"And if I were, could you bear it? Could you bear to have me tell you that good news has come to us from over the sea to-night and that someone is coming here to tell us all about it, and—and—"

"Arley," Lady Elaine said, a strange calm settling upon her, and lifting her white face to look at her sister. "You are going to tell me that Wil himself is here! That is why you have dressed me as you knew he would like to see me; that is why you wanted to put those lilies on my breast."

"And if it were all true, could you bear it?" Arley interrupted, with shining eyes, yet trembling like a leaf; and the beautiful 'Lily of Mordaunt' knew that it was true.

Without a word she fell back in her sister's arms limp and white, and Arley was dismayed. She put out her hand towards the bell-ropes to summon aid, but Lady Elaine stopped her with a gesture.

"I shall not faint," she whispered. "I shall be stronger soon; but, oh I tell me, can it be true?"

"That Wil was not killed; that he had a dreadful fall, but a blessed tree saved him; that Indians, instead of a wild beast, picked him up, bruised and broken, and carried him far away into the wilderness where they have held him a captive ever since? Yes, dear, it is all true, only I cannot stop to tell you half, for he is waiting to do that. But I am so glad that I was chosen to bring you these blessed tidings, for you have given me back so much of happiness, and I am nearly wild with joy to think that the shadows are about to be lifted from your life."

"Wil here! my own noble-hearted Wil, safe, and waiting to see me! Oh, Arley, I feel almost as if earth and sense were slipping away from me! Hold me close, dear; let me feel your arms clasped tight about me, to assure me that it is not a vision of my imagination. Oh, thank Heaven!"

The gentle girl was utterly strengthless for the time being; she could not move, she could scarcely think; yet she was conscious of the

one transporting fact that her dear one was not dead, that he lived and loved her still, that he had returned, and was even then waiting to clasp her to his fond heart once more.

Arley was very much disturbed by her helplessness, and, laying her gently down upon the couch where they had been sitting, she brought a flask of eau de cologne and bathed her face and hands, after which she went for a glass of wine, and made her drink it.

This treatment seemed to have the desired effect, for Lady Elaine began immediately to recover her dormant energies. A realising sense of the great joy that had come to her began to assert itself; impatience to see the returned loved one seized her; the pathetic look which had overwhelmed her beautiful face began to fade away; the light of a great happiness came back to her eyes, and her lips, though still tremulous, regained something of their usual brightness.

"I am better," she said, sitting up, but she seized the flask of cologne which Arley still held, and drenching her handkerchief, bathed her face and head, and eagerly inhaled its pleasant perfume; but she was still trembling in every limb.

"I am afraid that I have told you too suddenly," Arley said, regarding her anxiously. "I know I made a bundle of it, and it was the hardest thing I ever did in my life; but Wil is waiting, and I was so eager for you to know. Darling, now you will forgive me for being so cruel as to ask you to dress so gaily; but I could not bear that Wil should see you in mourning for him."

Lady Elaine caught her about the neck and gave her a little hug; then she laughed aloud, such a happy, though somewhat nervous laugh, as had not escaped her lips for many a long month.

"Bring me a glass, please," she said, a beautiful colour coming into her cheeks, "for I cannot trust to even your perfect taste now. No, indeed, I would not have had him see me in those dismal robes for anything. Ah," she continued, looking into the hand-mirror which Arley had brought her, "I cannot improve upon your work, and I might have known it, for your taste is faultless."

"My taste faultless?" Arley cried gaily. "I have but made you look as nearly as possible like the 'Lily of Mordaunt,' who was the cynosure of all eyes at the ball at Hazelmere. Now, dear," she added more gently, "are you ready? Shall I go and bring Wil here to you, and then go to break the news to Sir Anthony and Lady Hamilton?"

"Yes; but—oh, Arley, can it be true?" Lady Elaine cried, brokenly, growing white again as the lilies upon her bosom.

"You must be calm, or I shall not go for him," Arley returned, almost sternly; "and just think of the suspense that he is enduring all this time."

"True," was the more composed response; "I was selfish not to think of that myself."

Arley bent to kiss her sister, and then went to call the waiting lover.

Swiftly passing along the corridor she ran down a side staircase to an entrance facing the stables.

Here she rang the coachman's bell, and then, opening the door, stood waiting for Wil. Presently she saw him coming, but he staggered almost like a man intoxicated. He was deathly pale, and she saw that he was almost as unsteady as Lady Elaine had been in prospect of this reunion.

"Stop!" she said, firmly, as he would have rushed past her without even asking where he should find his loved one. "You must not go to her like this—it has been a fearful shock to her already, and if you are not calm she will be ill."

"I know, but I thought you would never come," Wil answered, putting his hand to his head in a dazed way; "and I can hardly believe that I am home after all—I am almost afraid that I am asleep and dreaming, and shall wake up to find myself in that wretched wigwam in that western wilderness. But I

will not be so weak," he added, straightening himself resolutely; and Arley turned without another word and noiselessly led him up the stairs and towards her sister's boudoir.

She softly turned the silver handle and opened the door, and there, standing in the middle of the floor in an eager, listening attitude, her scarlet lips parted, her blue eyes shining like stars, her spotless dress trailing about her, and the lilies on her breast quivering with every pulsation of her heart, was the loveliest vision that she had ever seen.

Pushing Wil gently within the room, she closed the door, the happy tears raining over her face and her heart full of wondrous joy.

She went to her own room, and, while dressing herself in festal robes for this glad occasion, gathered something of more composure, and then went to break the news to Sir Anthony and Lady Hamilton, which she succeeded in doing with less excitement and abruptness than when she had told her sister. Who can describe the joy that reigned at Mordaunt House that night? No one could do justice to it, for the reunion was one of those blessed and perfect events which weak words are far too feeble to portray effectually.

When all had grown somewhat composed after the exciting meeting, Sir Anthony, in a broken and trembling voice, said:

"My boy, you know I used to say that I did not believe in a God—a personal being, who loved and cared for human beings as His children. I said and believed, or at least tried to satisfy myself that I believed, that the laws of nature were all the God there was, and that religion and the worship of a Supreme Being was but a mere sentiment. But the life of this dear girl," taking the hand of Lady Elaine, who was sitting beside him, "during the past year, and now your wonderful preservation, with all the attending circumstances, and your return to us, have convinced me to the contrary. Henceforth," he continued, reverently, "I shall confess my belief and trust in an All-wise Ruler, and my future shall be spent in His service, to prove my gratitude for this supreme hour of my life."

Lady Elaine lifted his trembling hand to her lips.

"Dear Sir Anthony," she said, while grateful tears stood in her lovely eyes, for he had often grieved and wounded her by his scepticism, "this is the crowning joy of all!"

## CHAPTER LXI.

LADY PAXTON.

BEFORE Arley slept that glad night she wrote a full account of what had transpired to Philip, and begged him to return to her just as soon as possible.

"We are all so happy that we want you here to share it with us," she said; "and when you do come, the reunion will be complete—perfect."

A few days brought a reply, as fond and tender as the most exacting heart could wish; but Philip said he could not return just yet. He hoped it would not take him much longer to complete his business. He supposed he could run up to London for a few hours, but that would be very unsatisfactory, and he felt that it would be better for him to remain until he had settled everything to his mind.

Arley, though disappointed, strove to be content and to make the best of it. She was so sure of her happiness and his truth, that she could afford to be patient for a little longer, she thought.

Annie Vane and her husband were telegraphed for at the earliest possible hour the next morning after Wil's return, and not many hours elapsed before they were on the spot to greet him.

Miss McAllister and Ina were also sent for to come and rejoice with the happy household; and it did not seem as if there could be a more blessed family on earth than that which gathered around the hospitable board in Mordaunt House upon that day.



Lady Hamilton sat by the hour and feasted her eyes upon the face of her idolised son. Sir Anthony got up a dozen times during the day to go and take him by the hand.

"I cannot feel quite sure, even yet, that it is true, unless I touch you, to assure myself that you are really flesh and blood," he would say, tremulously, and as if to apologise for the act.

Lady Elaine was content to simply sit by her lover's side, where she could look at him and listen to his voice; but her face was once more the radiant face of the Lily of Mor-daunt.

Arley, growing every moment more buoyant and like the bright girl that she was when we first knew her, flitted about like a Lightsome fairy, performing little offices of love for the dear ones about her, and attending to the comfort of the family generally, for no one else seemed capable of doing it, so absorbed were they in the returned wanderer; while Eddie Winthrop followed her from room to room, feeling almost as if she was an odd one, and left out in the cold, and he wished to make it up to her by showing her all the attention in his power.

Once, when they were passing through the hall together, Arley put her arm about his shoulders and gave him an ecstatic hug.

"Isn't it beautiful, Eddie, to have everybody so happy once more? And when Uncle Philip comes—"

A soft kiss, dropped from tremulous lips upon his forehead, told him better than words could have done what that coming would be to her.

"Yes," he assented, with a little sigh, half of content, half of sadness, as he thought of those two lonely graves in the distant churchyard; "it seems almost like Heaven." "But," he added, with a flush, and a fond glance up into her face; "I never thought anybody could grow so lovely as you do."

"Thank you, little flatterer," she returned, laughing; "it is all because I am so happy. Happiness is a great beautifier, it is said. But, Eddie," she asked, suddenly; "how is that invalid limb?"

"Oh! it is ever so much better; there is no soreness at all now. That last wash that the surgeon gave me has done it a great deal of good."

"I was thinking," Arley said, speaking very tenderly, for the boy was exceedingly sensitive about his lameness; "that I would like to take you to Monsieur Roulin's, and have that new foot fitted to you, so that you can get used to it a little before Uncle Philip comes, and give him a pleasant surprise. Besides, there is to be a grand wedding very soon, to which we are invited, and I shall want my boy to make as fine an appearance as possible."

The boy wound his arm about her waist with an impulsive movement.

"How good you were to say that I might always stay with you and Uncle Philip—how I love you!" he said, earnestly.

"Why, Eddie!" Arley cried, deeply touched by this manifestation of feeling, "it wasn't because I was 'good' at all; I shall even have to confess to being a little selfish about it. I wanted you, for I began to love you that day when I first met you in the Academy. But come, I want you to go to the conservatory with me, to help me cut and arrange some flowers—we must deck the whole house to-day in honour of our guest, and then by-and-by we will steal away for an hour or so, and go to see Monsieur Roulin's."

Ina Wentworth's wedding-day drew near, and when Wil heard of it, and that Lady Elaine, Arley, and Annie had been chosen to act as bridesmaids—for Ina said she would have only those whom she loved about her, when she took her marriage vows upon her—he declared that if Sir Charles and his fair bride-elect did not object, they would make a double wedding of it, for he did not intend to

stand upon ceremony, but claimed his wife at once.

All seemed to be pleased with this arrangement; even Lady Elaine did not demur, though it gave her very little time, and so it was decided that there should be two brides instead of one upon the ninth of December, the day set for the ceremony.

Philip was notified of this decision, and wrote that he thought he should be able to get through with his business so as to return the day before the wedding, and though Arley was growing very impatient, she was still very happy, and so busy and interested in the happiness of others around her, that the days slipped very quickly by.

Eddie was provided with his new foot, and found that he was not nearly so awkward with it as he had expected to be at first. Arley was greatly astonished and no less delighted, when, on the day that they went by appointment to get it, he walked a little way down Oxford-street with her, and scarcely limped.

She had an errand at her lawyer's office—which was only a short distance from Monsieur Roulin's rooms—which was no other than to commission the good man to settle an annuity of a hundred pounds upon good Jane Collins, and Captain Bancroft's destitute widow.

Lady Elaine had already made the same provision for them, and thus those humble, but whole-hearted people were made comfortable for the remainder of their lives.

The day before the double wedding—the day set for Philip's return—arrived, and all through its long hours Arley watched for her husband with almost feverish impatience and anxiety.

But he did not come.

Late in the afternoon there came a telegram to her, saying that, to his great disappointment, he had missed his train, but he would surely be with her early in the morning.

This was a great and unforeseen trial to the young wife, and for awhile made her sad and depressed.

"It is too bad, Aunt Arley; I am so sorry," Eddie said, glancing ruefully at her overcast face, and slipping his hand within hers to show his sympathy.

She heaved a deep sigh; then she turned to him with a smile.

"I was so sure that he would come that it seemed very hard to get this," she said, touching the telegram; "but I will try not to cloud the happiness of anyone else, and the few hours that must intervene will soon slip away."

"I will imagine," she added to herself, "that to-morrow will be my own—my real wedding-day, also, and that Philip will then come to claim his bride," and she exerted herself all the evening to make everything bright and pleasant for those around her.

Just as the family were about to separate for the night Arley and Lady Elaine were standing together with their arms twined about each other, and Sir Anthony went up to them and laid a hand upon the shoulder of each.

"The 'Lily' and the 'Rose' of Mor-daunt," he said, smiling fondly upon them. "Two of the sweetest flowers that ever bloomed in this world of ours: Heaven bless you both! I love you both almost as if you were my own daughters."

Morning came—a beautiful, cloudless morning—a perfect day such as gloomy London rarely knew: and there were sweet voices, radiant faces, and busy hands and feet in Mor-daunt House.

At nine o'clock a carriage drove rapidly down the street, stopped before the door, and Philip Paxton, strong, well, and never hand-somer, sprang lightly to the ground.

A figure at that moment suddenly disappeared from the window above the hall, and when he entered the vestibule below a lovely vision came gliding down the stairs to greet him.

(To be concluded in our next.)

## NOT NOW, BUT BY-AND-BY.

BENEATH a vine-clad cottage-porch,  
An aged woman sat in thought;  
A dreamy look within her eyes  
Told that some distant scene she sought.  
Her knitting, trembling hands had dropped;  
The ball down to the floor had strayed,  
And there, unnoticed, roguishly  
A kitten with the white yarn played.

"Good friend," I said, "may I come in  
To rest awhile my tired feet?"  
"Aye! come in welcome," she replied.  
"Though old the place, its rest is sweet."  
"I noticed you were lost in thought,  
When first I spoke. But tell me, friend,  
If God permitted, would you like  
Your long life once again to spend?"

A pause ensued. Then, with a smile,  
The aged one this answer made:  
"A strange, eventful life was mine,  
Of joy and grief, of sun and shade.  
Some days of life I would give worlds  
Could I live o'er, though not below.  
Yonder—aye, dearie, doubt it not!—  
I shall relieve each one, I know."

"Yonder? Why, friend, that might not be.  
You cannot live life o'er again."  
"Aye, dearie, aye!—in memory  
Relieve its joy, but not its pain.  
Not here, my child. This life is cold.  
The richest fruit it bears in love—  
That here is often crushed, and droops,  
But thank God it revives above!"

"Yes, yes! I know that well, dear friend.  
But would you live again the past?—  
Become a child, live just the same  
Your life—then come to age at last?"  
The dear old woman raised her eyes  
To Heaven, then softly made reply:  
"Aye, aye! Praise God! at last relieve—  
My dear, not now, but by-and-by!"

E. T.

## CLIFFE COURT.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

THE doctor's prophecy proved correct. Two days later, when he went to the Court, he found his patient all anxiety to communicate to him the result of her retrospect.

"What you said seemed to give me a sort of key to it, sir," she said, putting her knitting down, and giving all her attention to her subject; "and I puzzled and puzzled over it until things became clear. Margaret Sumner was the proper name of the girl who was with us, only we always called her Daisy. My sister, Janet, never liked her, because, you see, sir, she was so very pretty, and Janet herself set up for being a beauty; and while we were making the voyage, I remember an affair happened that made Janet quite hate her. It was a matter of a sweetheart—some young man on board made love to Janet, and she fell—or fancied she fell—head over ears in love with him; so they got engaged, and then, when he saw Daisy—who had remained in her cabin for the first week or so—he was so taken with her beauty that he transferred his affections, and Janet would have that Daisy tried to attract him—which I am sure she did not. However, my sister never forgave her, and vowed she would be revenged—and she kept her word."

The speaker paused a moment, but her hearer did not speak for fear of interrupting the continuity of her reminiscences, and in a little while she went on,—

"When we arrived at Melbourne Daisy got a situation as governess in a family, and my brother met with an accident, which made it impossible for him to go up-country, as he had formerly determined, so we had to stay with him, and do the best we could. A few months later he died, and then Janet and I were thrown on our own resources, and obliged to get a living

for ourselves, for we had neither the money nor the inclination to go back to England; we therefore took situations in shops, which kept us employed all day—although it was an employment that neither of us liked.

"Meanwhile Daisy had met with a former lover, who she had known in England, and who married her, and they both went away to a sheep-farm that he had taken. A little while afterwards she wrote and asked if Janet and I would care to go to them, as her husband could give us both employment in sorting wool, and we were only too glad to go. When we arrived Daisy told me that her husband desired to keep their marriage secret from his friends in England, who were very rich people, and that, in obedience to his wishes, she had not mentioned it to her aunt and uncle, who fancied she was still acting as governess in Melbourne. The enforced secrecy seemed to grieve her a good deal, but she was so utterly devoted to her husband that his slightest fancy was law, and as she did not wish us to mention the marriage, of course we did not do so—indeed, we soon dropped all correspondence with our English friends, for we had not left behind us anyone we particularly cared for. Well, time went on, and a little boy was born to Daisy, who was christened 'Hubert,' and soon afterwards Janet had an offer of marriage from a sheep farmer, living some distance away, and she accepted, and became his wife. I went with her to her new home, and we lost sight of Daisy and her husband, for after a little while we moved farther up country. Some years later, we heard that she had died directly after we last saw her, and that her husband had only survived her a year or two, and then we learned nothing more about them.

"Our life was a busy, hard-working one, and we had not much time to think of anything but our work, especially after the death of Janet's husband, when we were left to shift for ourselves. We didn't get on very well, and it was just as much as we could do to keep going. However, we managed it somehow, and about two years ago my sister fell ill, and I had to give up my work to nurse her. They were very hard times that followed; we were as poor as we could be, for we had not managed to save money, and there was no one to whom we could apply for help, so you may fancy that our condition was not an enviable one. From the first I knew Janet could not recover, for she was suffering from an internal disease for which there is no cure, and gradually it dawned upon me that not only was she suffering physically, but that she had something on her mind which tormented her almost as much as the pain itself. Several times I asked her what it was, but she answered me angrily, telling me to mind my own business; so at last I determined to say no more about it, and it was she herself who next mentioned the subject. One night she was very much worse, and thought she was dying, and then she said,—

"'Esther, you were right in your suspicions about having something on my mind; it has weighed upon me like a burden for a long time.'

"'Then why don't you get rid of it?' I asked, for I was always of a practical turn of mind, and never wasted time beating about the bush. She sighed, and didn't speak for some minutes, then she said, energetically,—

"'I will get rid of it; at all events, I will tell it to you, and you may, perhaps, make reparation. It not nice to talk of one's bad deeds, Esther—one thinks nothing of them while one is strong and healthy; but when one comes to lie on a bed of sickness, they rise up, and look altogether different. It seems to me that I never used to stay to think, and if an idea of death ever came I used to dismiss it, as if it were something very far off indeed. It looks quite near now, and I know I shall have to face it before very long—even now I feel its grim shadow falling upon me. I wonder if there is any truth in a death-bed repentance!'

"'Certainly there is,' I told her, 'repentance, whenever it comes, must be acceptable to Heaven.'

"'I wish I could think so!' she sighed; and then, after a little while, she told me a secret that she had kept for many years. It seemed that she had never forgiven Daisy for supplanting her in the affections of her former lover, and while we were living in her house, Janet had overheard a conversation between her and her husband. He had brought in news of the burning of the church in which their wedding took place, and, as he told it to his wife, he said,—'You must take care of those certificates, Daisy, for the clergyman who married us, and the old woman who witnessed the ceremony, are both dead, and if anything happened to the certificates, we should have no means of proving the marriage.'

"This made a great impression on Janet, and she contrived to find out where Daisy kept the documents; after that it was easy enough to abstract them, and it appeared that for all these years they had been in her possession.

"'Perhaps Daisy never discovered the loss,' I said to comfort her.

"'Very likely not,' she responded, but don't you see the influence, the absence of those certificates, would have on her son? If he were entitled to property he could not claim it, for he could not prove his right to it.' This was what had been tormenting her; and so at last I promised to go to England, and take the documents with me. After her death there would be nothing to keep me in Australia, and it struck me that perhaps Hubert Cliffe, if he were alive, might find me some employment in return for the service I should render him.

"My sister did not last very long, but before her death she gave me the papers, which I, for security, stitched up in a linen bag, and hung round my neck."

The doctor gave a great start, remembering how he had said that the bag probably contained love-letters or some rubbish of that sort. Esther Grant did not heed him, but went on,—

"I sold what few things I had, and by that means contrived to gain enough money to get back to England, but the very first night of my arrival my purse, containing all I had, was stolen from me, so I was left entirely destitute, and had to dispose of some of my small stock of clothes in order to get bread. It was a hard struggle to get to Cliffe, but I resolved that no difficulties should daunt me, for I determined the wrong committed by my sister should be righted; and as I tramped along, across the country, I used to find myself repeating the two names, concerning which you asked the other day—Alec Cliffe and Margaret Sumner. I don't rightly remember the full particulars of that journey, for it seems to me more like a dream than anything else, and all that is distinct is the weariness and pain I endured from want of nourishment—for I used to go for days sometimes without anything to eat."

Dr. Fletcher parted her kindly on the shoulder.

"Don't distress yourself by trying to recall these painful reminiscences, my good woman," he said; "they were bad days, but they are over now, and you may rest assured they will never recur again. I can answer for it that Hubert Cliffe will not see you want, for your information is most valuable to him. Now about these certificates—are they still about your person?"

"Yes, sir, for the bag has never been taken from me."

"You had better give them to me," said the doctor, who was all impatience to behold them, "and I will at once render them up to their rightful owner."

"But is there not a Lord Cliffe?" asked Esther Grant, looking puzzled. "I understood, when I was making inquiries, that Alec Cliffe's elder brother was owner of the estate."

"So he was a few months ago, but he is dead, and his nephew could not claim the title for want of those very papers you hold at the present moment—so you see of what great importance they are."

The woman drew frow her dress the linen bag, and cutting the string that had held it round her neck passed it to Dr. Fletcher, who, with a few strokes of his penknife, slit the linen from top to bottom.

Out of it fell a little bunch of faded flowers. For a few seconds the doctor and his patient gazed at them in stupefied silence.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the former at last, rising angrily from his seat, "are there two bags, or have you deceived me?"

"Neither sir—I am as much astonished as yourself—more, if possible"—was the earnest response. "This is the identical bag in which I sewed up the papers; the linen is peculiar, and I could swear to it if necessary."

"But what brings these trumpery leaves inside?"

"That I cannot tell. I did not put them there."

Evidently she was telling the truth, for she bore the doctor's keen scrutiny without flinching; and he, who was accustomed to reading character, at once decided in favour of her veracity. The affair was a mystery.

"You are sure you put the papers inside?" he queried.

"Sure—quite sure! Why, sir, you don't think I should undertake a journey from Australia here on a fool's errand if I knew it, do you?"

"Why, no, it is not likely; but still, here is the fact before us. You said the bag contained documents, and when we open it we find, instead, some withered roses."

Esther Grant looked utterly bewildered.

"I can't deny it, sir; but, all the same, am unable to explain it. This much I am sure of, that when I was brought to Cliffe Court the documents were safely inside the bag. It is since I have been here they have been changed."

Dr. Fletcher sat down again and considered. He was inclined to think this last assertion must be true; but who could have been the thief?

He reckoned over in his mind all the people that had seen the sick woman—Arlene, the nurse, Lady De Roubaix, and Lord Cliffe. The first was beyond suspicion, the second would have no motive for such an act; and, besides, he knew her as a thoroughly honest and trustworthy woman, so there only remained Cliffe and Lord Cliffe.

"It is that infernal French Countess!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "She is capable of doing anything that will serve her purpose. Good heavens! suppose she has destroyed the certificates?"

In that case all their pains would be of no avail, for the unsupported testimony of this woman, who had been found tramping the highway, and taken pity upon by the Viscount, would be laughed to scorn by a court of justice; and, according to her own testimony, the church in which the marriage was solemnised, together with the records, was burnt to the ground years ago.

The doctor called to mind how he had found Lady De Roubaix taking upon herself the duties of nurse and how surprised he had been at so inexplicable a taste on the part of a fine lady. Later on he remembered giving her the laudanum, and now he had no doubt of the purpose for which she intended it.

"I must go and make all the inquiries possible," he said to Esther Grant, whose countenance was pitiable to witness. "Meanwhile, hold your tongue concerning everything you have told me."

She readily promised, and on leaving the Court he drove at once to the home of the nurse who had formerly attended her, and who he was fortunate enough to find in.

"I want to ask you a few questions about what happened while you were at the Court," he said, too impatient for information to make any delay in coming to the object of his visit. "Can you tell me who visited your patient besides yourself?"



"Miss Lester and Lady De Roubaix," she answered, at once.

"No one else?"

She shook her head.

"No, sir, not that I remember. Stay—yes! Lord Cliffe came in for five minutes one night."

"And what happened during his visit?"

The woman narrated the details pretty accurately, for they had made an impression on her. When she finished Dr. Fletcher said,—

"You are sure there was no paper with writing upon it inside the bag?"

"Quite sure, for I think that was what his lordship expected to find, and he seemed very disappointed. I noticed, sir," she continued in a hesitating manner, as if not quite sure of how her information would be received, "that the flowers seemed rather fresher than might have been expected; in fact, if I had been asked to judge, I should have said they hadn't been picked more than a week, and Mrs. Grant had been lying there a good long time."

"Ah!" exclaimed the doctor. "Well, now about Lady De Roubaix's visits. Did you not think it strange she should take it into her head to spend so much time at a sick bed?"

"I thought it very strange, sir; but it was not my place to say so."

"Certainly not—certainly not. Did you ever see her ladyship trying to look at the bag?"

"No, sir."

"Nor anything strange in her behaviour?"

The nurse considered a moment.

"I think not, sir; unless, indeed, it was the night I went to the village, and when I came back I met her just outside the room, and caught her smiling to herself, as if she was very pleased about something or other. That was the night Mrs. Grant had such a queer sleep, and I wondered if you had put a narcotic in her medicine."

"I never gave her one in my life. You say she had the appearance of having taken it?"

"Exactly, sir, and her sleep was so deep and sound that it put the idea in my head. I believe I made bold to mention it to Lord Cliffe."

"Then he came in the same night?"

"Yes; but after Lady De Roubaix left."

Dr. Fletcher had no more questions to ask, being quite satisfied that Lord Cliffe had nothing to do with the disappearance of the papers, and he therefore took his departure, more low-spirited than he had been for some time, for he considered that Hubert's prospects of succeeding to his uncle's estates had now vanished.

Directly he got home he sought the young man, and told him all he had heard, for he thought it better he should know the truth at once.

"Then good-bye to my last chance!" exclaimed Hubert, trying to smile, and unconscious until this moment of how great his hopes had been. "At least, I have the moral satisfaction of knowing my parents were married, and that is a great deal."

"I don't know," said the doctor, ruefully; "it doesn't bring you any nearer the Cliffe barony that I can see. I am afraid there is no doubt your cousin stole the documents, but the evidence against her is purely circumstantial, so we should not make out a case to go to law about."

"No, most certainly we couldn't."

"And there can be no doubt that the papers were destroyed directly they came into her possession. She would be too cautious to keep them, you may be sure. I knew from the first moment I set eyes on her that she was no good; in fact, I said so."

But as this was a little formula the doctor repeated regarding the majority of his female acquaintance, it was not to be taken much notice of, although it must be confessed that his prejudice against the Countess had been more violent than even his prejudices usually were.

Hubert's position was indeed a hard one—

harder than ever now that he knew beyond a doubt that he was his uncle's lawful heir.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHRISTMAS had come, ushered in by frost and snow—"a real, old-fashioned Christmas," people said, as they brought in their logs of wood, and piled them high on the hearth, while outside a keen wind, that cut you like sharp points of ice, was blowing about, and boys were shouting as they skated on the frozen surface of the lakes, apparently under the impression that noise would help to keep them warm.

Lady De Roubaix had decided at the last moment to spend Christmas Day in England. "Christmas on the Continent was not Christmas at all," she observed, so on the twenty-third she arrived, with her maid, her courier, and her luggage, for she travelled with as much state as if she had been a royal personage, and wrapped herself in sables that the Empress of All the Russias would not have despised.

She was looking more beautiful than ever; but, in spite of this, it was impossible to be in her company long without noticing in her manner a certain restlessness that had not formerly been there, and which showed itself in a nervous movement of the hands and twitching of the lips. Directly she saw Mrs. Belton she inquired how Esther Grant was, and, on being informed that she was much better, desired to see her.

When the woman came to her room she questioned her rather minutely concerning her former life; but Esther, who had received instructions from Dr. Fletcher, was very discreet in her answers, and declared that her memory of past events was even yet vague, and after a little while the Countess rather curtly dismissed her.

She dined alone in her boudoir, for the state of the great oak-panelled dining room would have been dreadful in her solitude; and soon after she had finished she was astonished by the appearance of a visitor, none other than Dr. Fletcher, who, after some debating with himself, had come, in spite of Hubert's remonstrances.

"This is really very good of you," exclaimed the Countess, genuinely delighted to see some one, for she was heartily sick of the companionship afforded by her own thoughts, and though she did not like the physician he was better than no one at all. "You are my first caller."

"It is rather late to call, but I knew you did not arrive until towards evening."

"Never mind that. I am not a bit tired, but quite ready to hear all the gossip of the neighbourhood. Of course, lots of things have happened since my departure."

"Well, not so very many. Cliffe is rather a quiet place; you know," observed the doctor, who had taken the seat she indicated, opposite her own, and was now intently studying her face.

"But quiet or not, somebody is always being born, or married, or dying."

"Lady Carlyon is dead."

The flush on her face deepened a very little.

"Yes, it was extremely sad, was it not? And her little boy, too. Poor Sir Ascot!"

"Your pity is rather wasted on him."

"Is it? How so?"

"He does not mourn for his wife."

"You are mistaken," she exclaimed, rather eagerly. "If you were to see him you would acknowledge it, for he looks wretchedly."

"Indeed! Then you have met him lately?"

"He called on me in Paris some week or so ago," she answered, colouring again, and playing with her rings, on whose starry radiance the firelight was flashing, and bringing out a thousand little prismatic sparkles.

"Well, to tell the truth, I didn't come for the purpose of talking of Sir Ascot Carlyon and his domestic affairs, but of no less a person than yourself," said the doctor, with an entire change of tone.

"Of me!" she echoed, startled, and looking

up at him with wide-open eyes. "What"—with a little, affected laugh—"can you possibly find interesting in such a subject?"

"Perhaps, under ordinary conditions, I might fall in doing so; but crime is often interesting, although it may be, at the same time, revolting."

"Crime!" she repeated. "Who dares accuse me of it?"

"I do!" he answered, rising, and standing before her, stern and unbending. "I accuse you, Clarice Countess De Roubaix, of being a thief, and if you ask me what you have stolen I reply—the certificates of the marriage of your uncle, Alec Cliffe, with Margaret Samnor, and the baptism of their son Hubert!"

Every vestige of colour deserted her cheeks, leaving her as white as the marble mantel against which, as she got up, she leaned. Her eyes had the hunted look of a chased animal, and some of its fierceness; but her attitude in that first moment of surprise pleaded "Guilty" to the accusation as plainly as if her lips had spoken the words.

"It is false!" she cried, when she regained enough self-control to speak, but her lips and hands both trembled, and she had much ado to stand without support. "I say it is false!"

"And I repeat, it is true—your own demeanour condemns you. Innocence does not look like you do."

She did not speak just at once—her thoughts were taking an agonized sweep backwards. Could the nurse have seen her, as she abstracted the papers from the bag, substituting the faded flowers in their place? No, it was impossible, for she had taken the precaution of locking the door, and Esther Grant herself had been wrapped in the profound slumber produced by the opiate she had administered.

Could—? She did not shape her second thought into words, but sank down into her chair, powerless, while her dilated eyes were fixed on the doctor's.

"Have you the certificates?" she breathed.

Dr. Fletcher was entirely taken aback by the question, which was the last he expected she would ask. He looked at her fixedly, to see if she really meant what she said, and came to the conclusion that she did.

"No, you are quite well aware that they are—or were—in your own possession. If they are destroyed it is you who have destroyed them," he replied, taken off his guard.

A total change came over her; she rose to her feet, and faced him, the colour returning to her cheeks, the light to her eyes.

"So you have been trying to frighten me with a chimera, hatched from your own imagination!" she cried, laughing triumphantly.

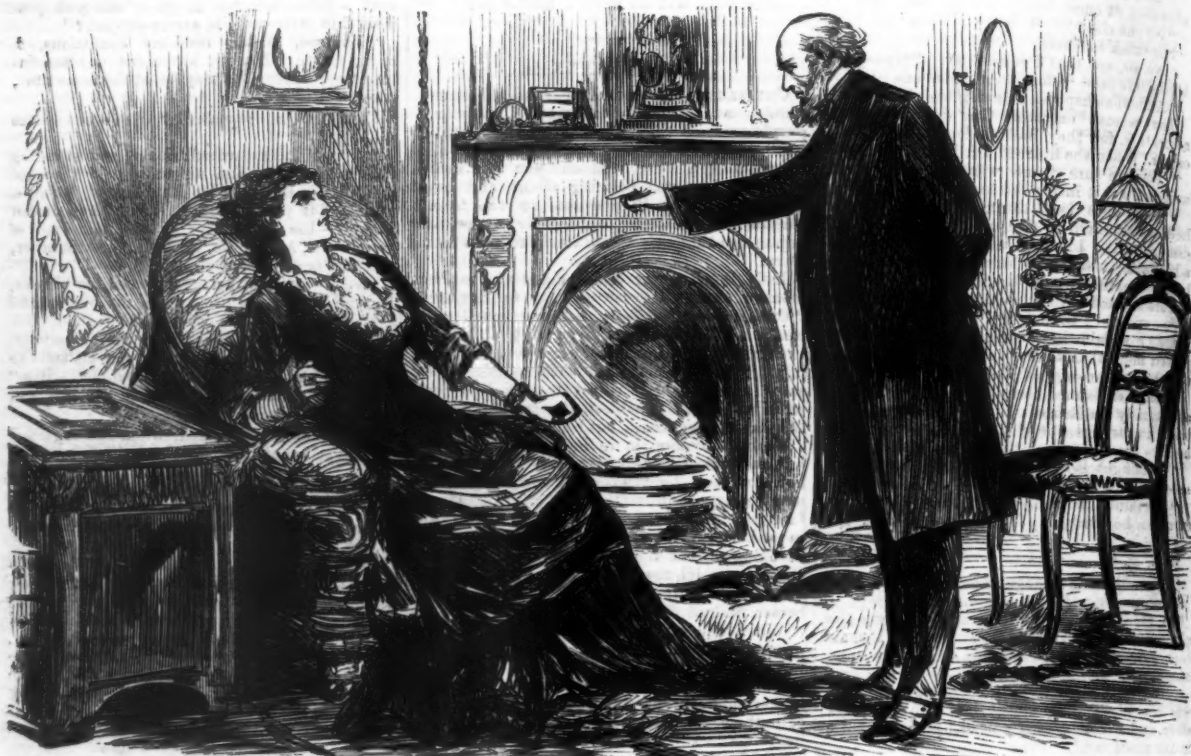
"Worse still, I was silly enough to be frightened by it. But you are mistaken if you think you are going to take advantage of my weakness to make terms with me on behalf of your protégé—the so-called Hubert Cliffe. I am not so silly as that, Dr. Fletcher. You will have the goodness to leave my house, and not to trouble me with any further visits in the future; otherwise I shall have to enforce my wishes in a manner that you might find disagreeable."

"Don't trouble yourself, madam," said the doctor, almost in too great a passion to speak plainly, "I will reserve my visits for honest women."

And with this Parthian shot he went, not altogether dissatisfied with the result of his visit, for he had proved, beyond a doubt, the Countess's guilt—at least, to his own mind.

"Still, there is something about it that I don't understand," he muttered to himself, on his way home. "What did she mean by asking me if I had the documents? Is it possible they are still in existence? By Jove, I believe that is the case! I will apply for a search warrant, and have Cliffe Court searched from garret to basement, and see if I can't be even with you yet, my fine lady Countess!"

His visit, if it had no other effect, at least had the one of considerably disturbing Lady De Roubaix, who after his departure remained



["I ACCUSE YOU, CLARICE, COUNTESS OF ROUBAIX, OF BEING A THIEF."]

in her boudoir, crouching down close to the fire, her hands clasped across her knees, and her brooding eyes fixed gloomily on the leaping flames.

She had been brave enough to his face, when she uttered her defiance, because her nature was essentially bold, and in a measure, courageous; but for all that she knew that, just for a moment, she had dropped the mask, and he had seen her guilt painted on her countenance as clearly as if she had knelt at his feet, and begged for mercy.

"How did he get to know of the existence of the papers?—who could have told him?" she mused; but, puzzle as she might, she could find no answer to the question, for the notion of Esther Grant having revealed her secret did not suggest itself—the woman's quiet, vacant manner had been effectual in lulling to rest all suspicions concerning the recovery of her memory; and, to tell the truth, those suspicions had had a good deal to do with the Countess's return.

Presently she got up and went to the window, but dropped the curtains again with a slight shiver; for the night was wild and stormy, and the blasts that came sweeping through the leafless trees outside had a peculiarly mournful effect.

"How horribly lonely I feel!" she exclaimed, involuntarily speaking aloud. "I should die of ennui if I were here long, alone. I wish—"

She did not continue her wish, but came to a thoughtful pause in front of the fire again, and remained for some time lost in musings that could hardly have found expression in words. Presently she resumed,—

"I am like one standing on the edge of a powder-mine, which may explode at any minute and ruin me; and the worst of it is, I have no means of securing my position. How shall I ever fathom the mystery of the disappearance of those papers?"

The more she thought of it the more perplexed she became; and, indeed, it was suffi-

ciently bewildering to puzzle a stronger brain than hers.

One by one she recalled the incidents of that night when she had abstracted the certificates—how she had given Esther Grant the laudanum sent her by Dr. Fletcher instead of the invalid's proper mixture; how patiently she had waited until the opiate took effect, and then how astonished she had been when she found what the bag really contained.

That it held some secret of importance connected with Lord Cliffe she had always suspected, but she had had no idea of how important it was; and her triumph may be imagined, for she saw at once how materially the possession of these certificates affected her own position. Without them Hubert could not claim the entailed estates, and Lord Cliffe, having no power to dispose of them by will, they would of necessity descend to herself.

With hasty stitches she had sewed the little bag up again, the task proving difficult to her unaccustomed fingers; and then she had gone to her room, and debated what she should do with her newly-acquired treasure.

To destroy it at once would have been imprudent, considering that it was possible she might marry Hubert, who, at that time, she was decidedly inclined to like; and, besides, the possession of the documents would always be a source of power in her hands; so the point was to find for them a place of safety, where there was no likelihood of their being discovered, and where they might remain until events had shaped themselves in such a manner as to prove a guide for her own future conduct.

This was a difficult matter, for she had lost the key of her desk, which was the unique repository for papers in her possession, so when she went to bed she placed them under the pillow, resolving to carry them about her person, until she finally decided where they should be hidden.

In the morning, when she looked for them, they were gone!

Yes, gone as though they had been carried off by some invisible agency during the night. She searched most carefully through the room, not leaving untouched a single article of furniture, but with a fruitless result; and what made the affair so much more mysterious was the fact that the bedroom-door was locked on the inner side, and the windows were all fastened, so that the idea of any one having forced an entrance had to be abandoned. Besides, no one could have taken the papers from under her pillow without disturbing her, for she was far from being a heavy sleeper, and thus the matter was rendered totally inexplicable—nay, almost supernatural.

The Countess, who was rather credulous, was inclined to regard it in this latter light, and to attribute her loss to some occult agency; nevertheless, she had spared no efforts to discover if the papers were still in the house, and this restless curiosity had attracted the notice both of Arline and Mrs. Belton.

Some little time later, Lord Cliffe, in the heat of his passion, had told her of Hubert's refusal to become her husband, and also that no proof of his parents' marriage had ever been forthcoming; but when she asked him, point-blank, whether he believed any such marriage had taken place, he had been compelled to answer in the affirmative, for he said that Alec Cliffe had declared with his dying breath that Hubert's mother had been his lawful wife, and added that it was only lately he had discovered the loss of the certificate, which he imagined must have been stolen.

And it was of these things Lady De Roubaix was thinking as she sat alone in her boudoir listening to the rain beating against the windows, and the wind howling round the chimneys of Cliffe Court.

(To be continued.)





["DO I DISTURB YOU?" SLADE ASKS, IN A SOFT, TENDER VOICE.]

NOVELETTE.]

## FOR A SEASON.

## CHAPTER I.

"I REALLY think, Slade, you ought to marry. It is quite time you did. When a man gets to thirty-five it is high time to put aside all sowing of wild oats, and settle down into quiet matrimonial respectability."

"Am I not respectable now, mother?" Slade Tanbull raises his eyes from the paper he is perusing as he speaks, and looks at the dainty little figure opposite, with its elbow sleeves, mittened hands, and shapely white-tressed head.

"In a way you are," acknowledges the old lady, with a nod.

"But you think I am still sowing wild oats?" There is a quizzical gleam in his dark eyes as he asks the question.

"Yes," she agrees with another dip of her silvery head.

"In what way, madame, may I ask?"

"In a good many ways."

"State them, please." The gleam is still in his eyes, the suspicion of a smile on his lip.

"You are too fond of going to London; too fond of club life—those horrid clubs where men acquire such luxurious habits, which utterly unfit them for home life."

"But, mother," he expostulates, "I must use my club when I go to town. What should I do without it?"

"Don't go to town at all," she responds, promptly.

"That would hardly answer. Business matters must be attended to, and as the family lawyer's office is in Bedford-row a visit occasionally becomes a necessity."

"Why don't you employ Lincoln and Gabbott of Spence's?"

"I don't like them, and Wrexall under-

stands all matters connected with the estate so thoroughly that it would be a pity to put affairs into new hands."

"Well, well; I suppose you know best."

"Perhaps so. Then there are my clothes," he continues. "I am sure you would not wish me to have my coats made by Denton, who turned out that suit you admired so much on Farmer Sturgis last Sunday. Fancy what I should look like, mother—a regular yokel."

"You could never look that, my boy," she says, regarding him fondly, for he has risen, and stands beside her, tall, broad, manly—a son any mother might be proud of. "Your race and blood would tell, even if you did wear Denton's suits."

"Probably; still I would rather not risk it. I thoroughly believe in the adage that hath it 'the tailor makes the man,' and—"

"Yes, yes," she interrupts, "yet you would never look common or countifict. Breeding tells, and shows even when clothed in rags. How different is the shabby gentleman of old family, even in threadbare garments, from the rich self-made manufacturer, clothed in the finest broadcloth! One quiet, self-contained, polished; the other fussy, vulgar, purse-proud, insufferable to all people of birth and education. One hears so much now-a-days about nature's gentlemen; I never saw one yet, and I have lived over seventy years in the world. A gentleman is one with good blue blood in his veins, a long pedigree, ancestors who have all distinguished themselves, and—"

"Something more is wanted, mother," he interrupts in his turn.

"Of course," she allows, "I know that. A man must be courtly, kind, generous, humane, sympathetic, agreeable to deserve the title thoroughly; and you will never make me believe that any of your 'half airs,'" she continues, with some vehemence, "any of your hybrid fellows have those qualities. They belong by right only to the well bred; it is ingrained in their flesh and blood. With others education may do much, but in unguarded

moments they betray themselves and show the coarse metal of which they are made."

"What an aristocrat you are, mother!"

"Yes, I acknowledge it; I am an aristocrat."

And she looks it as she sits in the great high-backed carved chair, with her clearly-cut features, clear piercing blue eyes, daintily-tressed head, her long, slim fingers crossed on the book she holds, her rich dress of antique material, and old point laces made in the fashion of bygone times, when the present generation were hardly thought of, giving her the appearance of having stepped out of one of the gilded frames that hang against the walls, and which surround panels portraying the fair, haughty faces of her ancestresses—for her husband had been her cousin as well as her lover—and his people were hers; she had married not one whit beneath her.

"We wander from our subject," she says, after a pause.

"What subject?" he asks, dreamily, his eyes fixed on the park which stretches away in undulating reaches to the edge of the cliff, at whose base laps the restless moaning ocean; that park, which is his chief pride and delight; where the dappled deer herd and the timid rabbits burrow; where tower great elms clad in golden splendour, and giant oaks, and horse-chestnuts; where the cuckoo is heard in spring, and the nightingale in summer, and the hoarse hoot-toot of the owl through all seasons.

"That of your marriage."

"Oh!" He makes a little impatient movement, and then asks, "What makes you want me to marry?"

"I think you ought."

"Why?"

"It is the duty of every man in your position. You have a fine estate, a good income, an old name, and you are the last of your race. You ought to leave an heir."

"Perhaps. Still I am very happy as I am, and don't feel inclined to change my state."

"You might be happier married."

"I hardly think so. I should never find a woman who would look after my interests as you do, dear mother," and he stoops and kisses her smooth cheek as he speaks.

"You might," she asserts, though evidently pleased at the compliment.

"I might and I might not. Marriage is such a lottery."

"True. Still some draw a prize, and a happy wedded life is just a paradise on earth."

"You drew a prize."

"Yes," says the old lady, with a smile, and the suspicion of a tear in her bright blue eyes, "yes, your father was a good man, and made a good husband. My will was over his; he never crossed or thwarted me from the day we wedded until the day he left me to go down through the valley of shadows alone."

There is silence for a few minutes between mother and son; he is thinking of the gallant, manly father, at whose side he rode to hounds as a boy, who taught him to strike out straight from the shoulder, *corte and fierce*; to pull an oar, load a gun and fire unerringly, and wield a bat or a cue with equal dexterity. She is calling to mind the many tender attentions lavished on her by the man whose sole and only love she had been. Once more she sees the dark, handsome face, with its deep eyes and mobile lips, before her; once more she hears the deep, well-remembered tones sounding in her ears, filling her with joy that is akin to the most bitter pain, and the tears in her haughty old eyes are dangerously near brimming over; but, true to her creed, as thoroughbred aristocratic she crushes them back; and stifling that rebellious pain at her heart she gives no outward sign of the inward conflict, appearing calm and collected as usual.

"There is no reason why you should not be equally fortunate in winning a prize," she continued, looking at Slade; and if her delicate face is a shade paler he does not notice it.

"No, there is no actual reason; yet I dread taking a step which may be looked upon as one in the dark, and you have told me often that the women of the present day have not much to recommend them as wives and mothers."

"Some of them, certainly have not—others have."

"The 'others' are few and far between, are they not, mother?" He asks, with that little soft smile which transfigures so wonderfully his somewhat stern face; then, not waiting for her answer, he goes on quickly, "The women of to-day are too independent to please my taste—too manly, I might almost say. Many are quicker and keener over business matters than their husbands, fathers, brothers, or any other unlucky male relative they may have to deal with. They know too much about dogs and horses, pigs and poultry, stocks and shares, bull and bear, Monte Carlo and *rouge et noir*, the setting of a compound fracture of the leg, or an amputation of the arm; dabble too much in the sciences, as De Quincey puts it; they have a smattering of mechanics, physiology, geology, mineralogy, and all the other ologies whatsoever, and are so fearfully 'blue' that they would absolutely frighten me."

"I don't think you are quite so easily frightened," remarks Mrs. Tanbull, with an answering smile; "and all the girls of the present era are not the manly and scientific creatures you describe them. Some are soft and womanly enough."

"Yes, then they are too much the other way. If they don't know all the good and bad points in a horse or bulldog, and don't ride straight to hounds, despite all obstacles, in a tall hat and a man's collar, they will probably scream at the sight of a mouse peeping out from the wainscot, faint if they see an accident and a little blood, tire after walking a mile, want to be assisted over every rough place of ground, smother themselves in *eau de Cologne* and strong essences, talk of nothing at dress and the last opera, and be anything

but above adding to their charms by fair means or foul. Now you know, mother, I could not kiss a woman with a painted face; the idea is too horrible."

"I quite agree with you; it is too horrible. Still all women do not make up."

"Most of them do," he rejoins gloomily.

"I know some who don't."

"Do you? Show them to me. Yet no," he continues, "they must be of the manly or scientific type. The Girton College woman disdains the aids of the toilet, and doesn't, I verily believe, possess such a thing as a looking-glass."

"I dare say not. The girls I speak of do, as they are not of the Girton College type, neither are they masculine or frivolous."

"You must have found a *rare avis*, mother mine."

"Two, my dear."

"Two! This becomes exciting. Who are they? What are they? Where do they live? How do they pass their time?"

"One question at a time. You overpower me with so many."

"Who are they, then?"

"Squire Davenport's two daughters."

"Davenport's! Why I thought he was abroad."

"So he was until last week. He lived in Italy on account of Rosa's health, she was delicate about the chest. You remember her?"

"Yes, I remember a pretty little girl with golden ringlets, and a pink-and-white complexion at Cliff's End."

"She is a pretty young lady now of twenty."

"How time flies!" and Slade sighs over that original remark. "It seems like only yesterday that we were all there on the lawn drinking tea, and eating old Hannah's cakes."

"Yes, but a good many 'yesterdays' have passed since then," and Mrs. Tanbull also sighs, for she remembers that the husband she loved so well was alive then."

"Is the Squire going to remain in England now?"

"Yes, Rosa is quite strong now, able to bear up against the rigours of our climate, and the younger sister Lois was dying to see the home she left ten years ago a child of seven."

"I suppose so. We northerners tire of the endless sunshine of Italy, the eternal blue of the sky, and long for a good east wind, and a heavy fall of snow, to rouse and brace us."

"Yes. You must go and see them, Slade."

"Of course, mother."

"Cliff's End is barely ten miles from here."

"I know. A pleasant gallop for me before dinner to-morrow."

"They want you to stay, at least the Squire does."

"And his daughters don't?" inquires Slade, with a gleam of merry mischief in his eyes.

"I can't tell!" replies his mother, composedly; "as they did not express any opinion on the subject."

"Oh! ejaculates Slade, "Did they ask you?"

"Yes. Of course it is impossible for me to go. I told them I never left home now."

"You don't feel equal to it?"

"No, old women are better at home. I accepted for you though."

"And do you intend to let me go there alone?" he asks, jestingly.

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Some danger may befall me."

"What danger could befall you?"

"It is generally thought there is some danger about the glances of pretty eyes."

"They won't hurt you."

"Mother! how can you tell?"

"Well, the worst you can do is to fall in love with Lois or Rosa."

"Do you think that nothing?"

"No, I should think a great deal of it. It would please me greatly."

"Then you really want to get rid of me?"

"I really want to see you happily married."

"And you think I should be so if Miss Davenport or Miss Lois became my wife?"

"I think so. They have several qualities that go towards making pleasant companions and good wives."

"May I ask what these qualities are?"

"Certainly. In the first place, they are very pretty."

"Handsome is that handsome does," he interjects sententially.

"Quite so. They are also good-tempered, healthy, active, good housewives. Can concoct dainty dishes, and bake bread, and make pies and puddings."

"Old Hannah has taught them that."

"Yes, and divers masters and mistresses have taught them several elegant accomplishments. Lois sings well, and Rosa plays with great taste. Then they are sensible and steady, and though far from masculine or loud, ride fearfully, and drive their ponies skilfully."

"How is it you know all this, mother?"

"They stayed with me last week."

"While I was in town?"

"Yes."

"You had ample time to study them, then?"

"Yes. Ample time, which I made use of."

"On my behalf?"

"On your behalf, my child."

"It was really very good of you." The gleam in his eyes deepens as he speaks; his mother's endeavours to marry him always amused him, they are so transparent.

"I am glad you think so, and I hope you will profit by it," she says gravely, rising and standing with one hand on his arm; and as they stand there side by side, the mother's silvery head scarcely reaches her stalwart son's shoulder, for she is a dainty, fragile creature, like a piece of Dresden china.

"The chief desire of my life is to see you settled here, with a wife and children. I don't want to see the old name become extinct."

"Neither do I."

"Then you must marry."

"I suppose so. I suppose marriage is a necessary evil."

"My dear, don't talk of it in that way."

"I won't if you don't like it."

"I certainly don't, and I want you to promise me that you will marry one of the Davenports."

"I cannot do that, mother," he says slowly, a curious look spreading over his dark face. "I cannot promise to marry a woman I have never seen, or, at best, saw only as a child many years ago."

"Time has improved them, has added charms."

"That may be, still I must see and know them before I decide. I may find that I could not care for either of them as a man should care for the woman he makes his wife."

"They are very lovable girls."

"I don't doubt it, and I will do my best to follow your wishes; still I cannot bind myself by a promise."

"Very well. Perhaps it is not fair of me to ask you to make one, only I am so anxious to see you settle happily before I die," she concludes with a little wistful smile.

"Don't look so sad about it, mother. I will promise to go to Cliff's End to-morrow, and make the acquaintance of your fair friends; but must do the rest," and, kissing her again, she draws the slender hand through his arm, and leads her with quite a courtly grace to the dining-room, where the great table groans under its load of glittering glass, costly plates, and good viands.

Under the influence of the generous wine and dainty fare Mrs. Tanbull recovers her usual aspect. The conversation flows into other channels; and Slade, as he talks of his favourite hunter, the harvest prospects, affairs in the East, and other topics, forgets that he has thrown down the gauntlet, challenged his



and that tomorrow he is to go, like the frog in the ancient ditty, "a-wooding."

## CHAPTER II.

The next morning Slade sets out early, and rides slowly to Cliff's End, through fields where the grain is ripening 'neath the fierce beams of the August sun, where the charlocks grow, and the poppies flaunt their bright heads.

There is no wind, only a light breeze, which sends the beautiful silver clouds drifting lazily across the blue heaven, and bears on its wings the perfume of honeysuckle and wild clematis.

A shower has laid the dust, and freshened up hough and leaf, hill and dale, vale and meadow. The hop-gardens are brightly green, the wheat red; the blue line of the sea lingers in the distance, the thickly foliaged woods are full of an enchanting silence, and the young man, as his gallant dapple grey mare carries him buganantly along, indulges in daydreams, engendered by the languid sweetness of the summer air, and the conversation of the previous night.

On goes his mare, on—on, taking him now and nearer to the sea, where the great waves rolled before the breeze, and the white gullies along the wall of dusky rocks, leaps high in the air, and then sinks; where the gulls corks and float on the waters with unbenumbed wings, and the porpoises tumble, and the ships sail just outside the reef, with all sails set, rounding the promontory at a quick pace, and the fishing-smacks, with their dark hulls and dingy rig, are steering straight to the fishing ground, going out with the tide, and dainty, graceful yachts are tacking and veering with every puff of wind.

For a moment he reins up, almost at the verge of the cliff, and gazes before him at the beach so varied with colour, with its patches of light-coloured sands—green, crimson, yellow, brown—its golden stretches of sand, its white rocks, and purple-hued loam; then he wheels round and gallops off at a smart pace, through the downs, which sink lower and lower until the cliffs cease, and the woods come down to the sea's edge, and there, embowered amid thick leafage, is Mr. Davenport's house—a queer red building, of no particular style of architecture, but inclining chiefly to the Elizabethan and Queen Anne periods—a place which has evidently been improved or spoilt by each successive possessor, who have managed, fairly well amongst them, to obscure the original design.

Slade rides up through the park and trim gardens, and reaches the door just as a stout, red-faced, jovial-looking man is preparing to descend the wide flight of steps which lead up to it.

The man in question wears gaiters and navy-like boots, a shot coat, with innumerable pockets, and a round hat, and is followed by half-a-dozen dogs of all sizes and descriptions.

From his general "get-up" and appearance he might easily be mistaken for the head gamekeeper; but Slade recognises him as the master of Cliff's End.

"What, Tanbull!" he exclaims, in cordial amazement. "Is it you, and so soon? I hardly hoped we should have the pleasure of seeing you, though your good mother did accept my invitation on your account."

"The pleasure is mine," responds the young man, springing from his horse and grasping the outstretched hand of his host.

"Not at all! not at all!" declares the other. "I am more pleased to see you than I can express. It seems like old times—when your father used to come over and stay with me for a shot at the grouse. You are the living image of him."

"So I have been often told. Then you would have known me, though nearly twelve years have elapsed since we met?"

"Know you? Yes, anywhere! You are David's second self; the same eyes, com-

plexion, hair, the same manner; it is quite wonderful!"

"I am glad of that. There is no one I would sooner resemble."

"I can quite understand your doing so. He was one of the best fellows that ever lived. A good shot, rider, fencer, and a thorough sportsman; in fact, a good all-round man of the sort which, unluckily, is becoming more and more rare every day. I hope you resemble him in his liking for field sports," adds the Squire, quickly, with a keen glance at him from under his shaggy brows.

"Yes," acquiesces Tanbull, "there is nothing I like better than a day on the moors, or a sharp spin with the hounds."

"That is right, we shall agree capitally," announces Mr. Davenport, who was the keenest sportsman for miles round, "and I hope you have come to make a long stay."

"As long as I can, but my mother is rather lonely at the Dene, and misses me sadly, I fear."

"Ah! I daresay she does. Why don't you get her a companion?"

"Well, I hardly know, except that I don't think she would care to have one," says Slade, as a groom takes his horse, and he follows his host into the house. "Companions as a rule don't answer."

"Well, I used to think so, but I've changed my mind lately."

"Indeed. What has caused the change?"

"The one I have for my girls—you remember Rosa and Lois," he breaks off to inquire.

"Yes. I remember them at a very early age."

"When they were pantatelles and pinafores, and showed a decided predilection for dolls and sugar-candy."

"Exactly so."

"They've grown out of all that now."

"So I suppose."

"Yes. They're sensible girls, very sensible, and I think some of it is due to Miss Bevis."

"Miss Bevis?"

"Yes, their companion."

"Oh, is that the lady's name?"

"Yes. Alicia Bevis."

"A pretty name. But I suppose the lady in question, like most of her class, is old, angular, and ugly."

"By no means, by no means," declares the Squire, with some vehemence. "She is very handsome, particularly so, in an uncommon style; her figure is as near perfection as anything I have ever seen, and her age at the outside is thirty."

"Quite an exception to the rule," says Slade, aloud; to himself he thinks that Rosa and Lois stand a good chance of having a step-mother, the squire is so very warm in his praises of Miss Bevis and her attractions.

"Quite an exception, and she is clever as well as beautiful. A woman who has read and thought, suffered and felt, and been ennobled by her trials. Then she is a good manager. My little Rosa has been too delicate hitherto to attend to domestic affairs, and Miss Bevis has managed my household, and managed it well. She is so thoughtful; nothing is ever forgotten—so quiet, so charming, that I really don't know what we should do without her, or what we did before she came to us."

"Has she lived with you long, then?"

"Five years. One time we were staying at Rome, and Lady Brabazon—of course you remember Lady B—, the old woman of eighty, who contrived to look forty by the aid of her milliner, dressmaker, and perfumer, and who, it is said, pinned her curly chequered wig on to her skull with those costly diamond stars, which she always wore amidst her luxuriant borrowed tresses?"

"Yes, yes, I remember her," laughs the other. "She was one of those once seen never forgotten."

"Rather. A regular old picture card. Well, she came to Rome and fell in love with Signor Foscamano, an opera singer, who in turn became enamoured of her brilliant and

money bags. A match was knocked up between the two, and her ladyship, not requiring a female companion any longer, as she was taking unto herself a male one, told Miss Bevis to go, and tried to get someone else to take her. And that someone else happened to be myself, and I have never regretted the marriage which took place between an English peeress and an Italian singer, though I think Lady Brabazon has. And that is how Miss Bevis became a member of my household."

"I see. I am getting interested in the lady you speak so highly of. Can you tell me some more about her?"

"That depends. What do you want to know?"

"Who she was, where she came from, her antecedents in general?"

"I am afraid you want to know too much. I can tell you this, that she must be of an angelic disposition to have been able to live with Lady B— for four years. A greater old Turk doesn't exist under Heaven."

"So I have heard. Did she say where Miss Bevis came from?" continues Slade, urged to ask all these questions by a feeling of curiosity he cannot stifle.

"I don't think she knew exactly," returns Mr. Davenport, with some hesitation. "A friend wrote recommending her, saying she was the last scion of a good Scotch family; and her ladyship being pressed for time, as she was just starting for Paris, took her without making any further inquiries."

"Ah!" ejaculates the young man, and that "ah!" speaks volumes, for he is wondering how a man with any sense could admit to close intercourse with his daughters a woman of whom he knows next to nothing, and who came from the establishment of such a disreputable party as the titled dame in question.

"No; I have never regretted that ill-assorted marriage," continues the Squire, "neither have my girls. There they come," he adds, excitedly. "Two bonny lasses, aren't they?"

"They are, indeed!" agrees Slade, looking at the girls as they come along the terrace, laughing and talking, their cheeks aglow with health—a pretty picture.

Rosa is short and daintily plump, with laughing blue eyes, a lovely delicate complexion and golden hair.

Lois is taller, and slighter, with grey eyes, chestnut hair, and a rich ruddy colour.

Both strikingly attractive and graceful, with an air of good breeding about them, which is very pleasing to the man studying them so attentively.

"Lois, Rosa, come here!" calls their father, as they pass by.

"What is it, father? We are in a hurry."

"What are you in a hurry about?" he demands, looking out of the window.

"We are going to see Vivid and her pups before dressing for dinner."

"You must postpone your visit to Vivid."

"Why?" they both exclaim, for the little beagle is one of their chief pets, and they are immensely interested in her and her litter of fat pups.

"Because I have a visitor here, to whom I wish to introduce you."

"Who is it?" queries the younger girl.

"Come and see," rejoins their father, drawing aside and letting them see that there is someone else in the room, for he is much given to joking and telling white lies to them.

Both come obediently forward.

Rosa steps first through the long French window, and Lois follows closely, all eager curiosity.

"Mr. Tanbull!" exclaims the former, in pretty astonishment.

"Yes; do you really mean to say you remember me?" asks Slade, taking the little hand she offers, and holding it for a moment in his.

"Remember you, oh, yes, well! Why, you gave me a Manx kitten and three white rabbits, and old Tims, the cat."

"Did I, really?" laughs the young man. "I don't remember it."

"I do; they gave me so much pleasure."

"This is Lois," remarks Mr. Davenport, who secretly favours his youngest daughter, and thinks there is no one like her in the whole world.

"I don't remember you," says that young lady, candidly, also holding out a small sun-browned fist.

"No. I suppose you were too young at the time we speak of to recollect what occurred then."

"Yes, I suppose so. And then you did not imprint your visit on my memory by presents of Manx cats and white rabbits. Rosa was the favoured one."

"I hope you will allow me to repair the oversight," he says, gravely, entering into the spirit of the thing.

"I don't know that I shall," she rejoins, with a gay laugh.

"Oh, do! I have a monkey which is very vicious, a culture of the most repulsive type, a cheetah, and a couple of whip snakes—any of these are at your disposal. Which do you think you would like best?"

"Well, really, I can't decide all at once," she replies, a merry gleam in her grey eyes; "they are all so tempting that I must take time to consider. Perhaps you would suggest which you think would be the nicest lady's pet."

"I should advise the cheetah; you can make much of him, he is a nice agreeable fellow."

"Very well, then, I will have him. Please let me have him at once."

"Certainly; I will send a message by one of the grooms," and Slade makes a feint of going to the writing-table.

"No, indeed, you won't!" cries the Squire. "I won't let the child have a nasty, dangerous beast like that. Why, it might fly at her and tear her face off, or do something dreadful."

"No, dad, it would be a nice pet," says saucy Lois. "I must have it."

"You shan't!" shouts her father, and then the girls laugh, and he sees they are making fun of him, and he laughs too, and mutters something about "saucy baggages."

"Well, if the squire won't let me make friends with you that way I hope you'll forgive me for my past bad conduct if I promise to be better in the future, and make no difference between you and Miss Davenport."

"Certainly I will."

"That is settled, then?"

"Yes, quite settled."

"And I think if it is that you had better go and dress for dinner, and let Mr. Tanball do likewise, or you will never be ready."

"Oh, yes, we shall. We don't take an hour to put on a dress-coat and a white tie," and laughing again merrily Lois links her arm through her sister's, and together they leave the room.

"Now, Slade, come along; those saucy girls will tease you to death if you happen to be five minutes late."

"I don't think I should mind that."

"Don't be too sure—you might."

"I might of course; still, I don't think it likely. Men generally don't object to being teased by charming young ladies."

"Ah, well, you'll have plenty of it here."

"Yes, Miss Lois seems full of fun."

"That she is—a regular little sunbeam. I don't want to part with her, but I suppose I shall have to some day."

"You can hardly expect to keep two such very attractive girls with you always."

"No," agrees the Squire, with a sigh, as he leads the way up the wide oak staircase to the guest-chamber, which is panelled shoulder high with richly carved, time-blackened wood, the ceiling heavily beamed, and the floor polished till it is slippery as ice in the parts uncovered by costly rugs.

"Hope you will like this room. I chose it for you because of the view, which is considered fine."

"Thanks, I like it immensely."

"Ring for anything you want—make yourself quite at home."

"Thank you, I will not fail to do so," and then as his host leaves the room Slade looks out at the view of far-stretching down, and wooded hollows, and golden beach, and tossing, glassy waters.

At the same time, while he gazes out over the sea, in the room above his a lady stands before the quaint oval swing-mirror, putting the finishing touches to her toilette.

Two candles in massive silver candlesticks are on the dressing-table, and two more decorate the great, high mantelpiece, but they utterly fail to light up the vast room, or chase away the shadows lingering in the distant corners of the gloomy though magnificent apartment, which bears the stamp of bygone time on all its fittings, from the deep recesses of the mullioned windows to the heavily draped, richly carved, plumbed bedstead, which bears a strong resemblance to a hearse, and looks a most uninviting place to repose in, and one that would induce dreams of charnel-houses, ghosts, and other spectral and unpleasant apparitions.

The ray of the candles falls on the antique mirror, which reflects a strikingly handsome face, oval, pale, with the exception of the lips guiltless of the faintest tinge of red; deep brown eyes, volcanic, intense, and yet full of a soft, melancholy light; a large, firm, but beautiful mouth; the dark, glossy hair banded smoothly over the white temples, and twisted classically round the shapely head, making the clear complexion look more colourless and most unearthly in its pallor.

She is fastening a trifling little brooch in the laces at her throat, where nestles one splendid crimson rose, and when it is done she steps back and takes a long, critical look at herself.

Most women would have flushed with pleasure if their mirrors told them the same flattering tale which hers told her, yet she does not.

She takes in all the grace of the tall, lithe figure, in its perfectly fitting dress, all the subtle charm of that tranquil, almost sadly, beautiful face, the lovely contour from brow to chin, the sweep of the dusky lashes, the arch of the delicate brows; yet all she does is to sigh as she smooths the shining hair with her taper fingers, and murmur—

"Oh, fatal beauty, that has wrought my ruin! Would to heaven I had been born ugly and undersized; I had not then carried such a sore, heavy heart in my aching bosom. It would have been better for me—far better—if the Comprachicos had still existed in the present century, still plied their horrid trade, and made a monster of me when an infant; kneaded my face out of all shape and form, planted an eternal grin on my lips, disfigured my nose, distorted my body, so that I was repulsive to look on. I fear my own beauty; and yet why should I? Then I was young, foolish innocent; now I am a woman, world-worn and weary. Such a thing could never happen to me again; but still, notwithstanding, I dread the coming of this man of whom I have heard so much. Some subtle instinct warns me to beware. I must shake off this feeling though, and appear calm as usual. There is no reason why he should look twice at me when Lois and Rosa are present—they are both so lovely. I must try to be amiable," and with a little wistful shake of the head she picks up the great black fan lying on the dressing-table, one of Mr. Davenport's many presents to her, through the medium of his daughters, and goes slowly out into the corridor, where two or three of his terriers are waiting for her, and followed by them she descends the wide staircase, goes, all unknowingly, to meet her fate.

### CHAPTER III.

SLADE is not long dressing. In an incredibly short space of time he has donned swallow-tails and white cravat, and now stands, looking very handsome and high-bred, by the

drawing-room windows, whistling softly, and studying his surroundings.

His host's proclivities are decidedly Indian, and, not knowing that he spent some years with an uncle in the East, he wonders at it slightly, and looks with a disparaging eye at the inlaid work-boxes from Bombay, the jade necklaces, silver card cases, ivory earrings of elephants, tigers, houses, figures, all manner of queer things, the Benares brasswork, the fat Burmese gods squatting in most ungraceful attitudes on their hams, the nick-nacks embellished with table-diamonds, the carved beads of scented wood, the flaming red canisters with curious winged animals on them, the Gorkha cookries, Malay crosses, Sikh tulwars, tiger skins, elephants' tusks, bangles, bracelets, all the things the Anglo-Indian loves, and which are mixed up with Italian daggers, Venetian glass, Spanish lace, Dutch jugs, Bohemian goblets, and other *bric-à-brac* in bewildering confusion, and which are also utterly out of keeping with the old Elizabethan room, with its tapestried furniture and panelled walls, in which they are placed.

He is still staring at the big uncomfortable, carved furniture, and the hideous Burmese gods and red canisters, from the recess of the heavily-curtained bay-window, when he hears the click, click of high-heeled shoes, and the swish of trailing skirts; and there comes from the distant entrance a vision—a feminine vision, be it understood—which makes his heart almost stand still for a moment, and then go on beating madly, for in all his life he has never looked on a face which seemed to him as fair as that of this woman, whom he knows intuitively is Alicia Bevis, the paid companion of Mr. Davenport's daughters.

She appears quite oblivious of the fact that the room has any other tenant save and except herself, and she holds a biscuit out for the little dogs, who caper about in a great state of excitement on their hind legs, in anticipation of the treat in store for them.

"There, Judy," she says, giving a bit to a scrap of a black-and-tan terrier, "that is your portion. Now, Bob, sit up and beg nicely, and, Dido, run find it," and lifting her arm she tosses the dainty to the other end of the room. The sleeve falls back and displays the rounded limb; the gesture is full of grace, and Slade remains silent, fascinated in spite of himself, contemplating the lithe form in its black satin gown, not of the newest or freshest, but in which the tall, queenly figure asserts itself to advantage.

How long he might have remained gazing it is impossible to say, but the spell was broken by Mr. Davenport's entrance, who was quickly followed by his daughters. He introduces Tanball, who comes forward at once, to Miss Bevis, and the young man is slightly astonished at the frightened expression in the lovely eyes, as they are lifted for one swift moment to his face.

He, however, bows politely, murmurs something, which is quite unintelligible to himself or anybody else, and then, as the gong sounds through the house, he gives his arm to Rosa, and follows his host, who is evenly-weighted with Miss Bevis on one side and Lois on the other.

Dinner is a pleasant meal, pleasantly served. The guidance of a cultivated feminine hand is visible in every detail; and Slade, forgetting his early distrust no longer, wonders that the dwellers of Cliff End should wonder what they did before the handsome woman who is the presiding genius of the establishment came to dwell in their midst.

He looks at her very often, and he can do so without appearing rude, for she sits directly opposite him, and the epargne of fruit and flowers is not high enough to hide her from his view; and every time he looks the indefinable charm that lurks on the sweet face grows stronger for him, and he feels that he can hardly turn his eyes away, which is scarcely fair, as the Misses Davenport admire him



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immensely, and chat to him with gay volubility, while Alicia keeps her gaze fastened on her plate.

Still she is very conscious of his presence, answers any questions addressed to her at once in a low, clear voice, but she does not regard him again, after the first long look she took at the clearly-out face, with its half-stern, half-cynical expression, which is relieved by the deep, tender eyes, and the almost womanly expression of softness about the lips, which are partly hidden by the heavy, magnificent beard, which, unlike his black hair, is of a dull, red-gold tint.

She does not dare to meet his eyes again, for the glance of them has thrilled her through, and through with a feeling she never thought to experience again, that, indeed, she has never experienced before, and that warns her he may be her *doppeldanger*, the other half of her soul, and she knows that she must not indulge in any fancies of that sort, that he has come to woo, and probably wed, one of her master's daughters, and she determines, for that and other reasons, to coldly repel any advances he may make towards being friendly.

This determination she keeps as the days glide swiftly by, and yet Slade Tanbull remains at Cliff's End, his restless spirit quiesced, that eager longing for change of scene and place which has hitherto distinguished him stilled by the magic of a woman's presence, the charm of a lovely face, which holds him a prisoner.

He hardly knows himself what an influence this almost unknown woman has over him—an influence which he has not by any means tried to obtain. On the contrary, his advances are met by a chilling reserve and cool politeness; but he does not see it. He only sees the glorious dark eyes, the soft, red lips, the graceful figure, and dreams of a future full of fair possibilities, of a life passed with her.

He has come to woo, he thinks, why should he not woo her? She is of a good old Scotch family; that much he has ascertained, and little more.

She is more to his taste than either of the Misses Davenport, and more of an age with him. They are too young and too childish, he considers, to make a fitting wife for such a man as himself; and, truth to tell, he already suspects that their affections are already engaged, for Lois wears the portrait of a sailor-cousin in a locket round her throat, and looks at it lovingly, while Rosa blushes in a most becoming manner whenever young Ricketts, eldest son of a neighbouring vicar, calls at Cliff's End, and that is very often; and as he is a keen sportsman he finds favour in Mr. Davenport's eyes, who knows nothing of Mrs. Tanbull's little matrimonial plot, and is quite innocent of any design to entrap her son into a marriage with one of his daughters, as, in his opinion, it is always best for young folk to choose for themselves. Thus Slade is free to follow the bent of his own fancy, and that leads him to Alicia Bavis.

After a week spent under the same roof with her he knows he shall never call another woman wife if it be not she, and he determines to woo and win her if he can. But the task seems difficult; she never appears to avoid him intentionally, and yet he is conscious that she never remains alone in a room with him.

If he finds her in the drawing-room alone she always makes some excuse and escapes at once. She accompanies the girls in all their excursions in which he joins, and invariably contrives to keep one or other of them at her side.

He never gets an opportunity of testing the state of her feelings towards him, and he is puzzled, sometimes wondering if his presence is distasteful to her, banishing that unpleasant thought the next moment, as he remembers one or two glances he has intercepted when she has thought he has not been looking at her, and the visible tremor he has noticed when he addresses her.

"Shall I ever get a chance of speaking to her?" he mutters one day, as he prepares to

go out on the moors with his host. "I'll try very hard. By strategy I may compass what I desire."

And he does. After stumbling knee-deep in the dusty heather, toiling manfully up hill and down dale for two or three hours, and bagging one brace of grouse, he makes an excuse to his host and the rest of the party and turns homeward.

They think he is vexed at his ill-success, as he is a crack-shot; but the truth is, his thoughts are elsewhere, and he cares nothing for the grouse, or ptarmigan, for the steady sunshine which sleeps the purple, wind-swept moors in ruddy light, for the genial breeze, the gay talk, the luxurious luncheon.

He wanted to be back at Cliff's End, as he knows Rosa and Lois are going over to the Dene to visit his mother, and that Miss Bevis will be left behind. She wants to sketch the tall promontory; she had said that morning the best view is from the drawing-room windows. He has hopes of finding her there if he returns early, and his hopes are not disappointed.

She sits in the recess of the bay-window with her pencils and portfolio, busily sketching the towering cliffs, and she is so intent on her work that she does not hear him come into the room or notice him till he stands beside her and speaks her name. Then, with a start, she looks up, the rich, vivid colour flushing her face from chin to brow, and drops her pencils in her agitation.

"Do I disturb you?" he asks, in a soft tender voice, as he picks them up.

"No," she answers, tremulously, trying to hide her agitation.

"Some artists don't like to be disturbed while they are working."

"Don't call me that," she expostulates, with an effort at playfulness. "I am no artist, only a poor imitation of one."

"I think you are. You have decided power, and only want a little good instruction."

"That I shall never get," she replies, a little wistfully.

"You might if you like," he responds.

"How?" she queries, looking at him, but something in his face frightens her, and she adds, quickly: "I could not take advantage of it if I had the chance. My duties here are too numerous."

"You will not always stay here, I suppose?" his eyes are fixed on her downcast lids as he speaks.

"Not always," she answers, with cold and forced composure. "When Rosa and Lois marry I shall leave; of course I could not remain."

"You will not leave before that interesting event or events?"

"I hope not, unless Mr. Davenport no longer requires my services for his daughters."

"Then you do not think you will marry yourself?"

"Good heavens! No!" breaks from her white lips, and she looks at him with scared eyes; then, as though ashamed of the outbreak, she stoops to pick up the sketches which have fluttered to the ground, and says quietly, "I shall never do that."

"I hope you will," he says, eagerly.

"I was not aware that our acquaintance warrants your making such a remark to me," she replies, with icy composure.

"Perhaps it doesn't now," he says, still more eagerly, "but it is hardly my fault that we are not better acquainted. Forgive me if I have offended; I did not mean to do so."

"Certainly."

"I think you avoid me."

"I am unconscious of doing so," she rejoins, calmly, gathering up all her things, and preparing to depart.

"I drive you away. You are going to avoid me," he ejaculates, reproachfully.

"You must excuse my leaving you," she smiled, with frigid politeness, "but I have several matters to attend to," and with a little bend of her stately head she sweeps

from the room, leaving Slade more hopelessly in love than ever.

(To be concluded in our next.)

## MADLINE GRANT.

### CHAPTER XXXVI.—(continued.)

In the middle of September a flock of visitors arrived from England, including Lady Rachel and the inevitable Levanter, Mr. Munro, M.P., two London girls—not the Miss Dancers, but the Miss Fortescues—two officers belonging to a Highland regiment, and a brace of lords, bachelors both, the latter Mr. Grant's own special guests.

Shooting was, of course, the order of the day, with a little variety in the shape of tennis.

The MacAllisters had returned to their Highland home, and rushed over to visit their old English neighbours.

One of the Miss MacAllisters was engaged to be married to a very ugly, bony Highlander, who wore the kilt, and looked as if he would not know how to wear anything else.

Mrs. MacAllister was in the seventh heaven of maternal felicity, and came and unbosomed herself of all her joys to Madeline, why or wherefore goodness only knows. Perhaps simply because she, like herself, was the head of a household.

She had talked herself breathless on the subject of the trousseau, and there was a pause, and she leaned forward and whispered to Madeline, with startling abruptness,—

"Well, my dear, and have you seen anything?"

"Good gracious, Mrs. MacAllister, what earth do you mean?" inquired Madeline.

"Just what I say!"

"Seen what—and seen anything—where?"

"Why! bless the girl!—impatiently—"in the castle here, to be sure. Of course you know the story of it by this time?"

"No, indeed, I do not, and I look to you to enlighten my ignorance, Mrs. MacAllister," said her companion, quickly. "And you shall not escape me this time!" holding her by her wrist, half in play and half in earnest.

"And you mean to say you don't know yet?" she demanded, with a gasp of incredulity. "Ah! I see now why you have come another season."

"But Mrs. MacAllister," cried Madeline, "you are just driving me out of my senses with curiosity! Tell me at once what it is? What is this great mystery—this secret?"

"My dear child, I would if I dare; but I gave my solemn oath on the Bible to MacAllister I'd never speak of it to you nor yours. It shall never come out through me. My tongue is a bit long, and I often and often say more than I mean. MacAllister knows that well. He is the other way. He says less than he means. Anyway, if it was only my word of honour I had given"—feeling sorry and sympathetic for Madeline's face of blank disappointment—"if it was only my word of honour I had given I would not mind telling you in a minute," with a burst of generosity. "But, you see, he has sworn me on the book, and I dare not go back of that. Some day, never you fear, you will know all for yourself," she added, consolingly. "It's strange—I never knew it so long before!" and with this encouraging assurance Mrs. MacAllister collected her little party, future son-in-law and all, and presently took her departure.

### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It so pleased Mr. Grant that he and all his party should go for an excursion to Loch Lomond.

Disgraceful to state, many of them had never seen far-famed Ben Lomond towering at one side and the cobbler and his wife at the other, and the inland dotted lake between.

Such ignorance was to be rectified promptly, and by a twenty-mile drive.

The party of excursionists found themselves all rather stiffly descending from the coach at Invermail and embarking on the steamer, already crowded with tourists.

Down the loch they puffed, the dense black smoke from the steamer's funnel by no means improving the view.

But the day was beautiful, the water reflecting the mountains: and the top of Ben Lomond without his nightcap for once. They stopped at various places along the lake, taking in or disembarking tourists.

Many were really quite studies in their way—the old gentleman with a long beard, who carried his wife's hat tied up in a pocket-handkerchief, whilst she wore a bonnet dated twenty years back; the German youth, in a bright green cloth suit and worked skull-cap; the Americans; the French, especially the elderly, faded-looking lady, who looked like a fashion plate, and sat with an umbrella over her head all the time, and never even glanced at the scenery; then the brides and bridegrooms, who pretended they were old married people—especially the bride of three weeks, who talked of the cook and her good recipe for marmalade to put the suspicious off their guard.

Madeline did not notice the humours of the boat; she was taken up with the views, and looking in every place but the right for Rob Roy's cave and the floating island, &c. They came at last to the very end of the Loch, to Balroob, where was the train, and where were swarms of tourists panting to rush on board.

Among those who came down the gangway, more deliberately and seemingly callous to his chance of a seat, was Mr. Glyn—yes, Mr. Glyn!

Madeline was the first to recognise him, and as she did so, her heart gave a convulsive throb.

To scoot him was not to be thought of; but her father's eager little eyes soon spied him out, and he soon ran him down. In five minutes more he had rejoined the party with his new friend in tow, and was saying to his white-faced daughter,—

"Madeline, don't you remember Mr. Glyn?"

Madeline smiled a ghastly smile, and bowed, and muttered incoherently. Her curiously constrained manner was, fortunately for her, unnoticed, as her brisk little parent fussed about, presenting the barrister to one of the party after the other in succession, whispering asides behind his hand—"Great legal star! Most rising man at the bar!"—whilst Miss Grant turned away and busied herself in looking over a series of views that were exposed in a basket for sale, and made a feint of selecting half-a-dozen.

Mr. Grant had a very ticklish law case in hand. Mr. Glyn had already been the means of pulling a number of chestnuts out of the fire for him as his counsel, and he trusted that he would do so again; and to make it worth his while, as he remarked to himself, he would have him at Dunkearn, and give him a fortnight's grouse-shooting there.

Madeline and Mr. Glyn did not seem to "hit it off," but that went for nothing; he was master in his own house, and trusted to his own resources to manipulate matters to a satisfactory conclusion, thinking (with a folly that was extraordinary in so shrewd a man of business) that he had only to enlist Mr. Glyn's personal interest to ensure the success of his suit.

"Nothing like a little bribery and corruption?"

But Madeline must do the agreeable; he was not going to allow her airs and nonchalance to put themselves in the way of his most important interests; and walking over to where she stood mechanically handling the photographs, he whispered,—

"Look here, Maddie, I wish you to be par-

ticularly attentive to Glyn. I know you and he have had some row, but you must put your pride in your pocket and be agreeable to him as my guest. His assistance is of importance. I'm going to ask him to Dunkearn, and mind you back me up!"

"To ask him to Dunkearn?" she echoed, drawing a deep breath, her face crimson with painful feeling. "Do not—do not! You know not what you are doing!" she whispered; but her last words died away unheard.

Mr. Grant, a man of action, had again seized upon Mr. Glyn, and leading him up to his daughter, said,—

"Miss Grant is anxious to persuade you to come and pay us a visit in our little highland home"—his playful way of alluding to Dunkearn Castle. "You told me just now that your travelling companion had returned to England, summoned by telegram, and that you had still a fortnight's leave. Spend that fortnight with us! I am sure that there is nothing to prevent you, and no one could be more welcome—eh, Maddie?" glancing quickly into the pale, intent face of his daughter.

"No one!" she echoed, mechanically; the words were spoken in a low tone, but with an air of quiet decision.

But still Mr. Glyn "was afraid that he really could not manage it, much as he was indebted to Mr. Grant. His time, although he had talked of a fortnight, was scarcely his own. He must deny himself the pleasure, although the temptation was great."

Madeline, who was but too well acquainted with every inflexion of his voice, knew that Mr. Glyn was speaking ironically; but Mr. Grant accepted his speech "au pied de la lettre," and turning, said,—

"I will leave it all in my daughter's hands. She shall persuade you," moved quickly away, bestowing, ere he did so, one imperious lightening glance upon his unhappy offspring, that clearly said,—

"Mind what you are about."

And thus the two were left to themselves; and Madeline's face, as she watched her retreating parent, burned with a painful feeling of degradation. He evidently intended that his daughter's pretty face should lure this young man to her home, that he might then be moulded to his own wishes. That Mr. Glyn and Madeline had had a quarrel he knew, but quarrels among young people were merely so many storms in teacups, and not to be deemed worthy of notice by a man like himself, who looked back on sixty years—of a hard fight for success—a desperate, hand-to-hand struggle with time, and circumstance, and chance.

If he could claim the El Dorado silver lode—to which that villain Fernandez-Rico had put in a counter-claim—he would be able to snap his fingers at Fate.

It was all a legal conundrum or lottery, and he had pinned his faith in this keen, expert, young lawyer, who was clever—very clever—and whose "smart" (as Mr. Glyn termed them) ideas fell from his lips with the ease of everyday common-places.

Madeline and Hugh were face to face and alone—although in a crowd—and Madeline instinctively raised her eyes to meet those of her companion for the first time. In these she met an expression of the most unmitigated indifference and contempt.

"Had you not better sit down?" he said, pushing aside her basket to make plenty of room, and then taking a seat beside her. "Your father wishes me to pay him a visit; but, what do you say, Miss Grant?" he asked, with concentrated bitterness.

"I say, come," she said, faintly, after a glance at his face, which had suddenly grown white, and the lines hardened round his lips, as he told himself that here—now once more flung by fate across his path—was the girl who had blighted his life, and ruined his hopes. What judgment should be meted out to her. Judgment—not mercy. At last he said,

quietly, "Don't you think it would be rather a mistake?"

"No," she murmured, looking straight before her. "It seems as if it were the finger of Providence. My father has taken an odd—an unusual fancy to you. Once under his roof I shall make the confession that I ought to have made long ago."

"Meaning that you were my wife?" he sneered.

"Yes."

"Thank you very much, but pray do not mind; it is too late now. If the child had lived there would have been an object in making this announcement. As he is gone it does not matter; in fact, it would be a fatal mistake to do anything of the sort. I have no wife. You are simply Miss Grant, the daughter of one of my clients—nothing else. I have made my mind perfectly familiar with the idea, and buried the past. The sooner you dig a grave for yours the better. Nothing—nothing can bridge the gulf between us. You are no more to me now than"—looking up for an illustration—"one of those girls over there."

Madeline—who was fully prepared to be penitent, and to make what amends for the past she could, and who had been hoping that some time Hugh would seek her out and withdraw what he had said on that terrible day last June—was cut to the core of her heart.

Grief, anger, shame, seemed likely to bear down all power of self-control.

She held her parasol between her face and the crowd, and with a great effort repressed her smarting tears, but two escaped in spite of her, and rolled down either cheek.

"Yes," she murmured, as she hastily brushed them away, "I know I have sinned past forgiveness, and I will bury my past too. I suppose you will not come to Dunkearn!"

"Well, I'm not sure that I won't. Business is business. It is to talk over some legal matters, and not to see my prowess with a breechloader, that your father is so anxious for the pleasure of my company. After all, I will come."

"Miss Grant," said one of the Fortescue girls, coming over to her suddenly, "I want to introduce you to an old friend, a school-fellow. You surely remember Florence Blunt? You were at Mrs. Penn's together for years, she says."

And there was Florence, as brown, sharp-faced, thick-set as ever, beaming at her under a big coloured parasol.

"Why, Madeline," kissing her, "who would have expected this? I would just barely know you. You are quite different to what I thought you would be," eyeing her plain but expensive-looking tailor-made dress and general attire—cloak, hat, parasol. On everything Miss Florence's acute eyes read the word money.

"I hope I am not a sad wreck!" said Madeline, with a ghastly effort at gaiety as she stood up.

"Not at all; quite the other way. By-the-by, is not that gentleman Mr. Glyn?" she added, in a lower voice.

Madeline nodded in the affirmative.

"Mr. Glyn," cried Florence, extending her hand, "I am so glad to see you, too. You don't remember me, but I remember you at Mrs. Penn's breaking-ups. You see, one or two gentlemen among a crowd of girls are more easily remembered than the crowd of girls by the one or two gentlemen."

And then she chattered on with as much volubility as ever, asking point-blank questions with her usual directness, blundering with elephantine tread over the most delicate ground.

Still, Madeline was glad to meet her, and finding that she and an aunt and cousin were making a Highland tour, asked her (minus the rest of the party) to come and spend a month at Dunkearn, promising her a safe conveyance south.

Florence literally jumped at the idea; her



Jaggaga was on board; she would be delighted to come now.

After a parley with her aunt, who was much impressed by Flo's fashionable-looking friends, the whole thing was arranged, and the Dankearn party at dinner next evening had two new recruits—Miss Florence Blunt and Mr. Glyn.

"By-the-way, Maddie," said that young lady as her hostess accompanied her to her room to see that everything was perfectly comfortable and correct, "I'm going to ask you something you need not answer unless you like. You know that I left school a great while before you did—but was it true that there was some awful row at the Penns about you and Mr. Glyn?" looking at her sharply with her inquisitive eyes.

"What do you mean, Florence?" said Madeline, with an assumed dignity, though her heart was beating very fast.

"Oh, if you are going to look at me in that way I mean nothing," said Miss Blunt, coolly; "but you and he had a flirtation—had you not?"

"I wonder how many you've had!" said the other, eagerly.

"Oh!" boastfully, and surveying her very plain reflection complacently in the glass as she spoke, "beings. What a state the Penns must have been in when your father turned up trumps, after all, Maddie? My! I never stayed in such a lonely place! I suppose," artfully, "you are very rich?"

"Well, yes, I believe my father is," indifferently.

"He will expect you to marry a lord at least, eh? Which of the two that are here?"

"Come now, Flo, you want to know too much," said Madeline. "You know your old names at school. Miss—why—why—Lady Crazily!"

"Oh, pooh! that's an old story now. Well, since you won't stay, good night; but there's not a bit of harm that I can see in taking an affectionate interest in one's neighbour's affairs."

And Miss Florence, as she lay in bed indulging in a pleasant conviction that she had done a capital day's work in coming across Maddie Grant once more—Maddie Grant rich, and not the nursery governess, whom she had labelled her mentally, and stored her away in that character for aye; but Madeline Grant a grand lady, beautifully dressed, prettier than ever, the mistress of a castle full of servants, and entertaining lords and ladies. It was wonderful!

"But how confused she looked when I said that about Mr. Glyn," said Florence to herself, "and how she drew herself up, and put on her tough-me-not look I remember so well! Ah, but you will find, my dear Maddie, that I'm not called Lady Why Why for nothing! I smell a rat. I shall make out Isabella Carr's address, and find out everything there is to find out. What is the harm? If it is all right there is no need for anyone to fear their past been looked into."

In her heart of hearts Flo, who thought much of her own status as a rich man's daughter, was jealous of Madeline's position, and would have been by no means sorry to find a little rift within the lute.

She could not conceal from herself that Madeline's social position was far removed from her own; that there was an equally vast difference in their appearance, and manner, and air; that she, who in her own little circle was, as she said herself, "a great swell," was nobody at Dankearn Castle, and all the attention she received was on the strength of her being a former school-fellow of the all-important, universally-admired Miss Grant.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The guests at Dankearn met at breakfast next morning—a lovely September day; setting off the far-stretching scenery which lay beneath the Castle to the greatest advantage.

Miss Grant, in an exquisitely-fitting dark-blue cloth dress, sat behind the urn, dispensing tea and coffee.

It was noted by Florence, who suffered nothing to escape her, that she never asked Mr. Glyn whether he took cream and sugar, tea or coffee—she seemed to know!

Florence could not keep this discovery to herself; her tongue would not be tied, and she observed to Mr. Glyn, with an arch look, "that apparently it was not the first time that Miss Grant had made his tea—she seemed to know his tastes so well."

Miss Grant's sharp ears were specially attentive to conversation at this side of the table, and she paused, sugar tongs in hand, and felt at that moment that Florence was a mean, vulgar wretch. How could she have cared for her at school? What would he say? She held her breath to hear.

He looked straight into Miss Blunt's pert face and observed,—

"Such a genius for observation as you possess, Miss Blunt, is indeed a rarity. What a pity that you cannot turn your talents to account, and run down some of our Nihilist or Fenian visitors. Miss Grant has done me the honour of making tea for me before"—Flo's eyes twinkled—"in Belgrave-square, but I can hardly flatter myself that she has made a special study of my taste for cream or sugar. By-the-way, is Mr. Blunt, of the firm of Blunt and Cinders, the coal merchant, any relation of yours?"

This was turning the tables with a vengeance. He was her uncle, and a by no means presentable relation, having been bankrupt, and not very honourably bankrupt, some time previously; in fact, his name was a byword in people's mouths, and over his existence his relations were anxious to draw the veil of oblivion.

This question, though put in a low voice, caused Flo's face to flame. It was a thrust between the joints of her harness, and Madeline, from behind her tea-urn, saw by her countenance that the tables had been turned very completely.

"He—he—we never speak of him. He is my uncle," admitted Flo, hating Mr. Glyn most consciously as she spoke; "but he is nothing but that in name."

"Oh, I don't know him!" returned the gentleman, in a tone that said "I would not know him." "I've had something to say to his affairs; a client of mine has had dealings with him."

"He is our 'skeleton in the cupboard!'" rejoined Flo, who had recovered from the blow. "Every family has such an inmate, they say," darting at him a look of defiance that, being interpreted by Mr. Glyn's acute understanding, meant, "And you have one, and I'm resolved to be introduced to it!"

"Oh, I thought family skeletons were out of fashion, along with fairies, imps and hobgoblins," he replied, coolly; "but you seem to be better informed, especially as you can speak from experience. 'May I give you some apricot jam?'"

"What an odious man this was!" said Florence, mentally, as she helped herself to two large spoonfuls. "And why did Madeline watch them? Was she jealous? Was she in love with him still?"

She had no leisure for speculating then, but in the evening, as they walked home through the heather with most of the shooting-party, she noticed Mr. Glyn for an instant beside Miss Grant's pony—he, who had never opened his lips to her!

He fumbled for a second with the flap at the off-side of her saddle, and said, as he did so, in a low voice,—

"That girl, Miss Blunt, suspects. I warn you to be careful of what you do and say before her," and then he poked up his gun and hurried on to join some of the foremost of the party, leaving Madeline and Levanter and two or three others to bring up the rear.

Now that he was actually staying under the same roof as Madeline, and saw what her life

was, he began to make allowances for her. Life at Dankearn went on wheels. Luxury was a feeble name for their surroundings. From the cup of tea and embroidered towels that were placed in one's bathroom of a morning, to the blank labels left to be addressed to friends afar, with hampers of grouse that lay on one's writing table, nothing was omitted.

As Hugh glanced round the old oak dining-room, hung with wax lights and paintings, and the big table loaded with old silver, at the head of which sat Madeline, he could not refrain from an admission to his secret heart that if, as she confessed, she had sinned past forgiveness her temptations had been great. Few girls of nineteen could have withstood them—such a rebound from the very depths of grinding want to the height of affluence. Then her father, what a hard-hearted, hard-eyed old fellow he was! Now that he saw him closer and caught many a trick of eye and expression, he did not marvel that Madeline was afraid of him. Scouter-hearted people than his daughter had quailed before his countenance when it took a hostile shape; and there were queer stories about him in the West Indies—not very pleasant ones. What was that about the two slaves who were secretly buried in the garden behind his country house in an old sugar estate. The matter had been hushed up; but a West Indian gentleman of Hugh's acquaintance had thrown out black hints, and had implied that Robert Grant's past had some very black pages, and that when he was roused he was a very devil and stopped at nothing; at nothing, he had added, significantly.

Could this trim, jaunty, little, elderly dandy, leaning back in his armchair and holding a slender wineglass between his fingers, and laughing a long, loud, rather forced laugh at one of the lord's "good things" (i.e., a very middling joke), be this very identical autocrat? Who would believe it? But Hugh Glyn, who looked beyond the surface, did. That crafty, quick, fiery, little eye told a tale that he could read. It spoke of restless ambition, of shifty principles, of greed, and of fury! Madeline probably knew the capabilities of that eye, and feared it!

For some days all went on very agreeably; the weather was fine, the bags were good, the sportsmen were in good humour, and so was Mr. Grant. One of the Miss Fortescues flirted with an officer, the other, Miss Fanny, flirted with Mr. Glyn, who was sufficiently human to like to see Madeline jealous (though from every eye but his this feeling was most carefully shrouded).

Miss Florence had "marked down" one lord for herself, and he, decoyed by her hints of her father's fabulous wealth, had not made any struggle against her fascinations.

Lady Rachel had a platonic friendship for Mr. Munro, and Levanter was in his usual position, viz., at Madeline's feet. There was tennis, there had been reels, and bosting, and dancing, and everyone was enjoying themselves very much indeed, or, at least, apparently enjoying themselves.

Mr. Glyn and Miss Grant avoided one another so skillfully as not to be singular, and yet they rarely met, except at meals, and still more rarely addressed one another. Miss Fanny Fortescue monopolised him almost entirely. He must play on her side at tennis; he must turn over her music; he must lead her pony—he had no choice, for her demands were imperious, and she was a very exacting young lady, who held advanced views about woman's rights, but did not practice what she preached; who talked milk-and-water politics to Mr. Glyn, and looked up in his face with tender eyes and parted lips, and an air of charmed attention, which, to say the least of it, made Madeline, who bore her ordeal with outward firmness, feel very miserable, and that in doing many little kindnesses for Miss Fanny, and inviting her home for the autumn, she had been nourishing a serpent in her bosom; but then how was Miss Fanny to know

that good-looking Mr. Glyn was Miss Grant's husband?

One afternoon the whole party had assembled in the drawing-room for five o'clock tea; it was now getting a little dusk—only a shade—but a thin, dull mist had driven the gentlemen early home from the hills.

Lady Rachel was helping Madeline to dispense the many cups, and both were seated on a sofa near the fire with a tea-table in front of them. Miss Madeline was a kind of prisoner, and was held in durance vile by circumstances and Lord Levanter. In the midst of all the chatter and clatter of cups and tea-spoons Mrs. MacAllister sailed in, accompanied by one daughter.

The new arrivals were hailed with delight, as a novelty, and sure to bring news from the outer world, and Lady Rachel politely vacated her seat on the sofa in Mrs. MacAllister's favour; and that worthy lady, when she had had two cups of tea in rapid succession, some buttered scone and short-bread, brushed the crumbs from her bonnet strings, and deliberately lengthened her face, as she looked round the company amidst a casual pause and said,—

"I've just come from a very sad errand—a visit of condolence to Mrs. Campbell, of Duntocher. Her only child—I went to ask for it; it had croup, and when I got there it was just dead!"—looking round her audience impressively. "She—they asked me to go in and see her—she was more like a mad thing than any woman I ever saw. It"—looking sideways at Madeline—"was her only child; such a fine little boy, three years old; and she's a widow, you know."

Madeline did not know, as it happened; but she was sure that if Mrs. MacAllister went on any longer with this tale about a child the age of hers, whom she had lost, she would not be able to endure it.

She clasped her hands very tightly together, and bent her eyes upon the tea-tray.

No one but Mr. Glyn happened to notice her sudden and ghastly pallor, and he was standing in the window with the eagle-eyed Florence. Perhaps she noticed it too!

"Thank you, my dear. I think I will change my mind, and take another cup of tea," said Mrs. MacAllister, interrupting herself. "This, I think, was my cup," holding it out. Madeline took it, but her hand shook so much that the cup rattled in the saucer, and put in three lumps without hesitation.

"Were you not very wet coming over?" she said, making a frantic endeavour to change the conversation; "and why did you not bring Miss Maggie MacAllister?"

"Well, I never meant coming here at all, to tell the truth; but as I was so far, and the child was dead, I thought I would come on. It saw it—the little corpse—laid out already. They are so quick with those matters now—flowers and wreaths. He looked really beautiful, and not a bit changed—his little fair curls so fair and natural-like. Oh, my dear Miss Grant, you're all of a tremble. I see you've a tender heart. But none but a mother that has lost a child, as I have, can really know what it means. It's like dying oneself."

Mr. Glyn, who was justly alarmed by the expression of Madeline's face—and now, for the first time, realised what her feelings had been, and saw the torture that Mrs. MacAllister was unconsciously inflicting—came nearer to the scene of action, and vainly tried to turn the attention of this good matron to himself—vainly, indeed. She had a story to tell, and she would tell it. And in the proper fashion taking her time over it, and not suffering herself to be unduly hurried or interrupted, and with much gusto and unction.

"Well, as I was saying, the child looked beautiful; just certainly like a little angel; its features quite composed. And this was strange; for the nurse told me before it died—lowering her voice a little—"its sufferings were something awful—convulsion after convulsion, and as black in the face as

my shoe—it was terrible! They had to keep her out of the room; but, as I said to her uncle, croup looks worse than it is; it's not nearly as painful as you'll think. Now if it had been diphtheria—"

What more she was going to add was never known beyond an expression of ejaculation in broad Scotch—unspellable; for Miss Grant, after endeavouring to rise, and moving a little to one side, fell back on the sofa in a dead faint, her arm coming violently against Mrs. MacAllister's elbow, and sending the whole contents of her third cup of tea over that horrid lady's best black silk—"and the cream will make it so greasy," as she said to herself between this catastrophe and the one beside her. She was at her very wits' end. However, her first thought was for the girl.

"Dear heart alive," raising up her head; "I saw she was looking very white; it was the fire. She's too near it. Take away the table, and some of you gentlemen carry her to the window!"

(To be continued.)

## SIMPLE PLEASURES.

EVERYONE admits and appreciates the pleasures derived from those creations of nature or of art that are grand, beautiful, or delightful in a very high degree. No cultivated man or woman dreams of disputing the claims of a great poem, a great picture, a great architectural work to be sources of correspondingly great enjoyment to those who appreciate them. A ramble through the most lovely scenery on the Continent, an evening spent in hearing the finest singers, or the most eloquent speakers of the day, would be to many of us a pleasure at once extreme and rare that we should be most ready to acknowledge.

But while dwelling on these great enjoyments, we are very apt to ignore the pleasure gained from the infinite number of things that in our thoughtlessness we consider too small and trifling to deserve our attention, much less our thankful appreciation. We call them "insignificant," and forget that a Father's hand gave them "to minister delight" in silent, half-hidden ways to those who, perhaps, have not the greater pleasures within their reach.

The enjoyment these little things of life bring to us is imparted by such unobtrusive means that we take it without marking how or whence it comes. It is only when we pause for awhile in the hurry of our daily life that the thought occurs to us how much quiet, restful enjoyment is gained from unnoticed sources, and we are minded to know more about the matter.

If we cast a mental glance over the ordinary course of our lives we shall not have to look far without finding some which may be classed in the list. The life must be very bare, or overshadowed by some terrible bitterness, to neutralize entirely the goodness of the simple enjoyments that gleam through the murk and confusion of life straight into our tired hearts.

To begin with, the most common of all daily occurrences is the receiving of letters through the medium of the post. Be it understood, there are "letters and letters," and amongst those that give pleasure we do not number the letter of the dun, the letter of fault-finding, the begging letter.

Who has not felt the thrill of delight that accompanies the reading of a dear friend's letter? Who does not know the gladness that the poorest sheet of paper brings, when from it we can gather the story of a daily life we find would share—the hopes, the tears, the inmost heart-thoughts—mingled with details that, be they never so trivial, never so insignificant, possess for us a charm more powerful than grand periods, majestic verse, or

gorgeous word-painting; for are not their charms overshadowed when we receive that simple thing—a friend's letter?

While we have in our thoughts the remembrance of this common pleasure we can scarcely fail to recollect other trivial but real things of pleasantness brought to us in connection with letters—such, for instance, as the photograph of some loved face we have longed to see; some trifling gift, the work of hands we find would clasp; a few withered leaves gathered from some spot of world-wide interest.

Then, again, what pleasure is more familiar to people generally than a walk through the woods? It is open to the poorest; yet what a wealth of delight can be obtained from it! How beautiful are the flowers, the moss, the ferns, the whispering leaves overhead, the graceful network of grey boughs, the glinting of the sunshine through the branches, the singing of the birds! What truer or purer pleasure is there than they give us! No money, no wealthy friend required to introduce us, but all free and open, waiting for our enjoyment.

Chief amongst our simple pleasures we may number that which we gain from flowers. Not the carefully-arranged bouquet of choice exotics, but a handful of the simple buds and blossoms that are within the reach of us all. How they change the aspect of a poor, bare room, glorifying it with their gentle beauty! Or in their own natural home, close to the brown soil or in the fresh green grass, what better emblems of grace and sweetness have we than they give us? They call for no raptures, they draw forth no loud-spoken praises; but their loveliness gives a quiet pleasure that sinks deep into the heart, and finds its truest response there.

Again, what more common sight than a company of happy little children, or what pleasure more real than that of adding to their merriment. Their radiant little faces, their joyous eyes, their ripples of laughter, the pretty music of their pattering feet, may give us an unalloyed delight that many a more costly pleasure would fail to do.

These are but a few amongst the many pleasures gained by little things. They are strewn thickly enough in our paths, if only we look for them.

It is those who are not so rich in this world's goods that can best appreciate these "common things" that minister to our pleasure. Those who live in luxury, surrounded with all the costly incentives to enjoyment that wealth can purchase, would pass those of the commoner sort by unheeded, the glamour of their greater gifts hiding them. There is about the pleasantness of these "common things" a quietness and a thoroughness that sinks deep into the heart; there is about them a seriousness, a whispering of solemn things; and when we toil and are disappointed we find a still, small voice of comfort speaking to us through them.

Surely, none can doubt it who have toiled and been weary, longing for some restful break in the monotony of the daily treadmill of existence, and have found it in some simple unpretending form, that has brought refreshment and recreation.

An umbrella loan society is to be established in Berlin. Branch offices will be opened all over the city, where members can obtain umbrellas in case of a sudden shower.

One of Shakespeare's pall-bearers lies buried across the Atlantic, according to an inscription in the cemetery of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The epitaph runs, "Here lies the body of Edward Heldon, Practitioner in Physics and Chirurgery. Born in Bedfordshire, England, in the year of our Lord 1542. Was contemporary with and one of the pall-bearers of William Shakespeare, of the Avon. After a long illness his spirit ascended in the year of our Lord 1618, aged seventy-six."



## PEARL'S CHOICE.

—0—

"Let her come to the farm," said old Mr. Blandford. "She'll enjoy the blue-bells and the orchards, and the clover blossoming along the roadside. It will be a great deal cheaper than Brighton and more sensible than Scarborough."

"Oh, papa, do let me go!" said Marguerite, or, as she was invariably called, Pearl, clasping her pink fingers ecstatically together. "Mamma, say yes."

A year ago Mr. and Mrs. Christy would have considered this sort of thing as nothing more nor less than banishment. The Misses Christy had never been anywhere else but Brighton or Scarborough, Nice or Trouville. But times were altered now. The "financial pressure," whatever that might be, had acted very unpleasantly on the atmosphere of the Christy household. Adeline, the eldest daughter, had just discovered that Mr. Fitzroy Fanshaw, to whom she had engaged herself, was not next heir to a baronetcy at all, but a defaulting clerk; and Aurora, the second blossom of the family tree, had been unceremoniously deserted by Mr. Lemaire, of the Lotus Club.

"If a girl—aw—hasn't got money, you know—aw," said Mr. Lemaire, "there's no use—aw—in keeping up the thing. We ain't like wawens, nowadays, to be fed by—aw—the prophets. We must—aw—have cash."

"But, mamma," pleaded Pearl, "you said I was to come out this winter."

"Child, don't be absurd," said Mrs. Christy. "I said you should be introduced into society, if Addie and Betsy were married, but they're not; and I can't go into ball-rooms at the head of a regiment of daughters. What would people say?"

"It isn't my fault that they are not married," pouted Pearl; "and I am so tired of the nursery. Mamma, can I go to Brighton with you?"

"Certainly not!" said Mrs. Christy. "And mind, Marguerite, if anyone asks you how old you are you must say sixteen."

"Why?" cried Pearl, with open brown eyes of astonishment. "But I was seventeen last birthday!"

"There's no sense in your growing up so fast!" pronounced Mrs. Christy, irritably.

"How can I help it?" said Pearl, almost ready to cry. "I can't put a stone on my head, can I?"

"There are the girls to consider," said Mrs. Christy, sorrowfully.

"How are they to be bettered by my telling untruths about my age?" retorted Pearl.

And then her mother told her to hold her tongue, and not speak again until she was spoken to.

So that old Uncle Blandford's offer was truly welcome when it came, and merry little Pearl was like a lamb let loose upon the Downs that surround Guildford.

She tore her dimpled brown fingers with blackberry-briers; she rifled birds'-nests for additions to her collection of eggs; she romped like a child, and whistled like a boy, until all of a sudden she was recalled to the facts of real life.

She had come in from the blackberry-fields all sunbrowned and happy, her muslin slounces half torn away, her cherry lips stained with the purple dyes of the fruit, to find Uncle Blandford pouring intently over a couple of letters.

"Well, little one," said he, "what do you think? Here are two surprises for you!"

"Two, uncle?" she cried.

"One to a picnic-party at Newland's Corner."

"Oh, can I go?" exclaimed Pearl, jumping up from her bowl of bread-and-milk. "Gerald Farquhar told me that—"

"Hold on, lassie—hold on!" said Uncle Blandford. "The other is a proposal of marriage. Mr. Penfield wants my sanction, and all that sort of thing."

"Mr. Penfield, indeed!" said Pearl, turn-

ing very red. "A stuffy old professor who don't know anything except about the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum!"

"You don't like him, pet?"

"No, indeed, I don't!"

"Then," said Uncle Blandford, indulgently, "there's an end of the whole thing. Only when my little girl begins to receive offers of marriage it gives me a queer sort of feeling."

Pearl ate her bowl of bread-and-milk silently.

"I wish they wouldn't," said she.

"Some day you'll wish they would," said the old gentleman.

And he laughed so heartily at his joke that Pearl could not but laugh also.

"But one thing you must mind, my little lass," he added, more gravely; "let that Gerald Farquhar alone."

"Why, uncle?" said Pearl, earnestly.

"He's a wild fellow," said Mr. Blandford.

"These Farquhars never any of them came to good yet."

"But perhaps he will," said Pearl.

"I wouldn't try the experiment if I were you," said Uncle Blandford.

And just then Pearl looked up and saw Geoffrey Moreland standing in the doorway.

"I wonder," she thought, "if he has heard all we have been saying? I don't like Geoffrey Moreland one bit. He is so precise and dignified, and Hetty Tracy says he thinks I am a romp. What business has he to think about the matter one way or another?"

So Pearl rose and went out of the room with the stateliest step that she could command; and, although Geoffrey waited until nine o'clock, she never came back.

"I wanted to ask her to go with me to the picnic," said Geoffrey to Mr. Blandford. "Do you think she will accompany me?"

"Well, I don't know," was the reply, looking intently into the bowl of his pipe. "I rather think, by what she has said, that she has made up her mind to go with young Farquhar."

Moreland's dark face flushed.

"Is he a fit associate for her?" said he.

"No, I don't think he is. But girls are queer!" reflectively added Uncle Blandford. "Just tell 'em you want 'em to go one way, and see how straight they'll start in the other!"

Geoffrey Moreland went away with a heavy heart. One smile would have made him happy, and she had not even vouchsafed him that.

But the next morning there came news that Gerald Farquhar had disappeared most unexpectedly, and so had a considerable sum out of the safe of Messrs. Taper and Twinefast, the solicitors, in whose office he officiated in the capacity of clerk.

And the first thought that flashed into Geoffrey Moreland's mind was,—

"Now I can ask Pearl to go to the picnic with me."

And yet Geoffrey Moreland was not more selfish than most men.

Just within the cool shadows of the woods he found Pearl herself, her hat hanging down her back, her tresses all dishevelled, her blue eyes drenched in tears.

"Why, Pearl!" he cried; "what is the matter?"

"I've lost him!" sobbed Pearl, clasping her hands despairingly. "He's gone!"

A sudden chill seemed to seize poor Geoffrey's heart. Had she then loved his rival so well? Were they actually engaged?

"And it's all my own fault, too," continued Pearl, with a fresh burst of tears. "Uncle warned me how it would be. He warned me against having anything to do with him. But I would have my own way, and now I am rightly punished. He's gone! Jerry has run away!"

"Pearl, for heaven's sake, do not speak thus!" said poor Geoffrey.

"But I can't help it!" wailed Pearl.

"Did you then love him so well?" bitterly demanded the young man.

"Didn't care a snap about him!" cried Pearl. "But uncle told me to let him alone, and I disobeyed. And now he has run away, and what will uncle say? Oh, I do wish the dog-catchers had captured him before I ever unfasted his chain!"

"Pearl," said her amazed lover, "what on earth are you talking about?"

"Why, about Jerry, the red Irish setter, to be sure," said Pearl. "What should I be talking about?"

"Is that all?" said Moreland, with a great sigh of relief. "Then you may set your heart at rest. He is safe enough. I passed little Sammy Soames on the mountain side a few minutes ago, bringing him home with a chain and a rope. It is of the other 'Jerry' I am speaking—Gerald Farquhar. He has run away, also, with a lot of money out of Mr. Taper's safe."

"Has he?" said Pearl, apparently very little interested in this secondary piece of information. "Well, I am not at all surprised. I always wondered where he got the money to pay for so much jewellery. I'm sorry for his poor mother, though. Are you quite sure that Jerry is safe, Mr. Moreland?"

"Yes, quite," said Geoffrey. "And now, Pearl, that you cannot go to the picnic with Mr. Farquhar—"

"But I wasn't going with him," said Pearl.

"He asked me, and I said no."

"With whom, then, are you going?"

"With nobody at all," said Pearl, with a charming pout. "Nobody has asked me."

And she looked at Geoffrey from under her thickly-curling lashes with such a laughing, mischievous glance, that he promptly followed up his advantage,

"Will you go with me, Pearl?" said he.

And Pearl made him a low curtesy, and answered demurely,—

"Yes, please, sir. Now let us go and find Jerry."

Uncle Blandford was dozing over the weekly paper—he had read it twice through already, but he seemed always to regard himself as devoted to literature when he fell asleep over the weekly paper—when Pearl came to him with Geoffrey, leading the red Irish setter by its chain.

"Oh, uncle, I'm so sorry!" said she, penitentially.

"I am so glad, Mr. Blandford," said Geoffrey.

"But I let Jerry out for a run, and he got away from me, and little Sammy Soames brought him back; and please, uncle, I'll never disobey you again. But, uncle, that isn't all!" she added, reddening exquisitely.

"Eh!" said the old gentleman. "What next?"

"I've promised to marry Geoffrey."

"Hallo!" said Mr. Blandford. "But I thought you disliked him?"

"Oh, no!" cried Pearl, with earnestness. "Only I was afraid that he disliked me! He called me a romp!"

"So I did," confessed Geoffrey. "But you are the dearest little romp in the world, and I love you better than any one else in existence!"

So Pearl was married to Squire Moreland's son, and the two elder Misses Christy were forced to confess that "our little sister" had led off the marriage minuet with distinguished success.

"But only to think," said Pearl, "of his being jealous of Gerald Farquhar! How silly men are, to be sure!"

H. F. G.

The man who missed a train by tripping over the train of a miss consoled himself with the reflection that he was a left man in the right place.

## FACETIÆ.

"Yes, they are excellent boots," said the shoe-dealer to a young lady purchaser; "they will wear like iron." "Do you think the buttons are sewed on securely?" she asked. "They are. The boots are supplied with the 'Old Maid's Wedding Button,' a new invention." "Way is it called the 'Old Maid's Wedding Button'?" "Because it never comes off."

**TOPSY-TURVY PROVERBS.**—Hunger is the best sauce; hence street-boys are naturally sane. Many men, many minds; but one woman frequently has more than all of them. They who dance leave the host to pay the fiddler. What cannot be cured supports the doctors. A fair exchange would ruin the stock-market.

**SCHOOLMASTER:** "What is meant by mental occupation?" **Pupil:** "One in which we use our mind." **Schoolmaster:** "And a manual occupation?" **Pupil:** "One in which we use our hands." **Schoolmaster:** "Now, which of these occupations is mine? Come, now, what do I use most in teaching you?" **Pupil** (quickly): "Your cane, sir."

Two gentlemen are discussing a third, while the coach jolts painfully over the uneven surface of the street. "He's a sad scoundrel, I fear," says one of the gentlemen. "Not such a sad scoundrel," replies the other, as the vehicular plunges into a hole in the roadway, "as you—." "Wh—what?" "As you think," says the other, triumphantly recovering his breath.

**SCENE:** School during examination. A crowd of parents and friends are present. Teacher (who has a fiery nose and great self-importance): "What is a bouquet?" **Boy** (innocently): "A bunch of flowers." Teacher (benignly): "Right. What, then, are nosegays?" **Boy** (with meaning): "Brandy-blossoms." Collapse of teacher.

A woman deranged in her intellect stopped a clergyman in the street with this salutation: "There is no truth in the land, sir; there is no truth in the land!" "You do not speak the truth, my good woman," replied the clergyman. "Oh, yes, I do," returned she, hastily. "Then there is truth in the land," replied he as quickly.

"Come, mother, come," said the son-in-law to an old lady, in obedience to the pitiful request of his wife not to be disagreeable, "let me make it up. You felt hurt, didn't you, because I said there was no woman in the world so unbearable as yourself? Well, never mind, I take it all back—there are others!"

The music-master says, very affably: "Now, you see, children, in a march we always have four beats to the measure, to accommodate the step; for I don't know of anything that has three feet except a milking stool." "Or a yard-stick," added a bright little girl in the back row.

"No, George, my mind is made up," said Miss Fassenfeather to her fiancé, young Crimmonbeak, when that gentleman was trying to persuade her to go somewhere against her will. "Is it?" replied he, rather tartly. "Yes, it is," was her firm reply. "Well, it isn't the only thing that's made up about you," said the fond youth, brushing the powder from the lapel of his coat and reaching for his hat.

**Mrs De BROWN:** "I have seen several of your paintings, Mr. Palette, and I admire them immensely." **Mr. Palette** (amateur artist): "Aw, thanks, my dear madame, thanks; you're very kind, I'm sure." **Mrs. De Brown:** "I think that your style is very similar to that of the French artist, Meissonier, particularly so as regards colour and perspective." **Mr. Palette:** "Do you think so? Aw, it is not infrequent in the profession for one artist to unconsciously follow the style of another artist, y'know; but it seems rather strange. I am quite sure that Meissonier has never seen any of my work."

"Yes," said Mrs. Kuidnunk, "we always buy our Christmas presents. It is the best way, we think. We are sure to receive just what we want, and then we don't have to give presents to other people in payment for gifts which we don't want and don't know what to do with."

A NEW game, similar to hide-and-seek, is becoming very popular in this country. It is played as follows: A cashier in a bank takes the money of the institution and disappears. Then the detectives try to find him. If they succeed, he comes home and has to pay a forfeit.

**BALZAC**, being asked to explain an abstruse passage in one of his books, frankly owned it had no meaning at all. "You see," said he, "for the average reader all that is clear seems easy, and, if I did not sometimes give him a complicated and meaningless sentence, he would think he knew as much as myself. But, when he comes upon something he cannot comprehend, he re-reads it, puzzles over it, takes his head between his hands, and glares at it, and, finding it impossible to make head or tail of it, says, 'Great man, Balzac; he knows more than I do!'"

It is much easier to be polite and neighbourly than to fly into a passion when things do not suit you. Take this note as an instance, addressed by a lady to a neighbour next door: "Dear Madam, Your children, who are numerous, and appear to be disorderly, no doubt deserve the frequent floggings you give them; but, as my nerves are weak, I write this to ask if you can't do something to deafen the sound."

**CHARLES DICKENS** was once prevailed upon to assist at a spiritualistic seance. When the opportunity was afforded, Mr. Dickens respectfully asked that the spirit of Lindley Murray be in attendance. A ghostly manifestation became visible in a corner of the apartment. "Are you Lindley Murray?" asked Mr. Dickens. A deep bass voice solemnly responded, "I am."

"Oh, Mr. Strut!" exclaimed Miss Maidenblush, meeting the leading man at the Boudoir Theatre:—"I've got a compliment for you—a splendid one, too! Uncle Frank saw you in the new piece last night." **Strut:** "How did he like my assumption?" **Miss Maidenblush:** "That's just what Uncle Frank said. He said it was the greatest piece of assumption he ever witnessed." "H'm! Glad to have met you, Miss Maidenblush. Good-bye."

"WONDER what Foochow ages will say when the story of the war between France and China is told?" remarked the slim-legged boarder. "Who cares what it says?" said the gruff fellow at the foot of the table. "What business have future ages to Pekin to our affairs?" Annan 'mong the crowd the puns flew fast and furious, until the landlady began to think that her china looked quite respectable beside its namesake in the Far East.

"I wish to look at some mourning goods," said a lady, as she entered a draper's. "Yes, madam," said the shopwalker, "this way, please." After looking through the entire stock she remarked that she would come again in a day or two. "May I ask," said the shopwalker, in a sympathetic tone of voice, "if the death occurred in your immediate family?" "There has been no death yet," she replied, sadly; "but my husband is very low."

A Scotch lady gave her servant very particular instructions regarding visitors, explaining that they were to be shown into the drawing-room, and no doubt used the Scotchism, "Carry any ladies that call upstairs." On the arrival of the first visitors, Donald was eager to show his strict attention to his mistress's orders. Two ladies came together, and Donald, seizing one in his arms, said to the other, "Bide ye there till I come for ye," and in spite of her struggles and remonstrances, ushered the terrified visitor into his mistress's presence in his unwonted fashion.

**MISS LILLY**, seeing a certain friend of the family arrive for dinner, showed her joy by all sorts of affectionate caresses. "You always seem glad when I come to dinner!" said the invited guest. "Oh, yes!" replied the little girl. "You love me a great deal, then?" "Oh, it isn't for that," was the candid reply. "But when you come we always have chocolate-creams, you know!"

In Victor Hugo's younger days, during a performance of his play, *The Burgraves*, Alexandre Dumas, seeing a man asleep in the stalls, said to his friend: "There, Hugo, watch the effect of your verve." A little nettled, Hugo waited for his opportunity, and a week later, while Dumas's play of *Henri III.* was being played, caught a spectator napping, and called Dumas's attention to him. "Yes," said Dumas, "but that's the same man who went to sleep the other night; it has been impossible to wake him."

**LISTON**, during his apprenticeship in Newcastle, quarrelled with Stephen Kemble, his manager, and threatened to throw up his engagement unless relieved from an inferior part. Kemble told him he might go if he wished, as "good actors could be found under every hedge." A day or two after, Kemble was taking a country walk in the fields, and observed Liston seated at the side of the ditch, earnestly watching the hedge opposite. "What are you doing there, Mr. Liston?" said he, "when you ought to be at rehearsal?" "I am looking for actors, sir," replied the son of Momus.

In a certain village a well-known bishop, during the exercise of his official duties, was quartered with the chief inhabitant, whose wife was absent on a visit, and the guest was given the spare bedroom. The wife, on her return, inquired who had been at the house in her absence. "Bishop X," said the husband. "Bishop X!" exclaimed the good woman. "And where did you put him to sleep?" "In the spare bed, of course." "In the spare bed!" shrieked the horrified matron. "Why, I put all the silver under the mattress before I went away!" And she rushed upstairs to the spare bedroom to see if the silver was safe.

**THE WRONG MAN CURED.**—It is said that an army surgeon once, during a campaign, was kept awake at night by the distressful coughing of the sentry outside his tent. Unable at last to bear it any longer, the surgeon turned out and made the sentry understand that his coughing must somehow or other be stopped, and to effect this he would mix him a draught, which he must take at certain prescribed intervals. The man was quite submissive, and the doctor turned into his tent and concocted the strongest, and therefore the nastiest, draught his chest would afford. He then came out, somewhat appeased by his own artistic success, and ordered the sentry to swallow the mixture. The man, protesting vehemently that he did not want it, at last tasted it, but refused it again, and was only finally induced to swallow it by means of the most fearful threats and aspersions on the character of his mother, his grandmother, and his great-grandmother. The surgeon returned to his damp floor, conscious of having done a good act. The result was evidently satisfactory. The sound of coughing ceased in the camp, and the surgeon went to sleep, thankful that he had been brought up in a country of scientific attainments and decided measures. The next morning he was sent for by the general commanding, who said to him: "How is this, sir! I hear serious complaints about you with regard to the sentries. One of them has reported that in the middle of the night you came out of your tent and abused him in the most awful manner; and another reports that you made him swallow a dreadful drink which he is sure must have been poison." The guard had been relieved while the surgeon was compounding his mixture, and he had cured the wrong man.



## SOCIETY.

THE PRINCE OF WALES will, it is stated, pay the Duke and Duchess of Westminster a visit at Eaton Hall. The Chester Corporation are endeavouring to arrange for the visit at the time when the Dee Bridge tolls will be taken off. These tolls are now levied on the bridge over the Dee which was opened by the Queen shortly before her accession to the throne.

LORD AND LADY CARNARVON have been entertaining a select party of friends and relations at Highclere Castle, his lordship's beautiful place in Hampshire. The castle itself is a comparatively modern building, and does not present, exteriorly, a very imposing appearance; but the park by which it is surrounded may be equalled, but cannot be surpassed, in the diversity and beauty of its scenery by any of England's historic homes.

THE BARONESS BURDETT COUTTS is again the subject of panegyric and the object of delight in Ireland. She forwarded to Dublin a large and costly consignment of attractive goods for sale at the Earlfort Rink Bazaar in aid of the Improvement Fund of the Rathmines Parish Church. A small act of thoughtful kindness such as this goes a long way with the native Hibernian, and the Baroness is extolled to the skies.

"THE GLEN," near Torquay, which has gained such a sad notoriety, is a pretty one-story building, with four windows on each floor and a long verandah, the pillars wreathed with creepers, running along the front. Only a low wall separates it from the road which runs along the beach of Babbacombe Bay. At the back of the house are trees, sloping lawns, and terraces, from which a view is gained to the English Channel. In summer, nothing can be imagined more lovely than the position; now, in winter, it is naturally dreary and desolate, without even the present melancholy association.

THE MARRIAGE of Prince Théophile Gagarine, son of Prince Eugénie Gagarine, prince of the Russian Empire, with Mary Susan, daughter of Mr. James Gillespie, of Lifford, co. Donegal, was celebrated in grand style at Liverpool, both in the English and Greek Churches. The bridegroom wore the uniform of an officer of the Imperial Russian Navy. The bride's dress consisted of a bodice and train of rich ivory, brocaded Irish poplin, the skirt being trimmed with Limerick lace, manufactured specially for the occasion, the gift of Mrs. Sellers, of Limerick; a wreath of orange blossoms, tulle veil, and diamond ornaments, the gifts of the bridegroom and his mother.

On entering the church she was met by her six bridesmaids, two of whom wore in cream and tulle, trimmed with ruby silk, two in ruby velvet and silk, two in cream nun's veiling and silk; each bridesmaid wore a gold brooch and carried a bouquet, the gifts of the bridegroom.

The ceremony, according to the rites of the English church being completed, the bridal party proceeded to the front entrance, from whence they, at St. Bride's, departed in the same order as they arrived en route for the Greek church. This building presented a most imposing appearance, being tastefully decorated with white caryatides and scarlet cloth; every available spot was utilized by the sightseers, admission being by ticket. The party on arriving were met by the Most Rev. Archimandrite Servos, attired in his full robes. The procession having been formed according to the custom of the Greek church, it slowly moved up to the centre nave of the table, the choir chanting all the time, the bride and groom following the Most Rev. Archimandrite Servos, and being followed by Mr. J. Montgomery and Mr. E. M. Sellers, of Limerick, best men, holding two crowns decorated with orange blossoms over their heads. Having made the three mystic tours round the table and received the blessing, the ceremony was brought to an end.

## STATISTICS.

LONDON STREETS.—There are 1,966 miles of streets in London, including the 243 miles now in course of construction. The streets completed are paved as follows: Macadam, 573 miles; granite, 280 miles; wood, 53 miles; asphalt, 13½ miles; flint and gravel, 780½ miles. The existing area of wood pavements is 980,538 square yards, and its estimated cost £600,000. Wood is increasing in public favour for its powers of resistance and durability.

ASCENTS OF MONT BLANC.—Statistics concerning the ascent of Mont Blanc are given as follows:—The first ascent was made in August, 1786, by two Frenchmen. During the 90 years from 1786 to 1876 no fewer than 535 expeditions, consisting of 661 persons, reached the highest point. Among the 661 persons who ascended Mont Blanc 385 were English, 110 French, 70 Americans, 34 Germans, 30 Swiss, 8 Italians, 7 Russians, 6 Austrians, 4 Spaniards, 3 Poles, 2 Dutch, 1 Swede, and 1 Norwegian. The number of victims claimed by Mont Blanc amounts to about thirty.

## GEMS.

WIT should be used as a shield for defence rather than as a sword to wound others.

Few things are more necessary to success in life than decision of character. With it a man can rarely fail; without it he can rarely succeed.

If we apply ourselves seriously to wisdom we shall never live without true pleasure, but learn to be pleased with everything. We shall be pleased with wealth so far as it makes us beneficial to others; with poverty, for not having much to care for; and with obscurity, for being unenvied.

EVERY one should be his own physician. We ought to assist, and not force nature; but more especially we should learn to suffer, grow old and die. Some things are salutary, and others hurtful. Eat with moderation what you know by experience agrees with your constitution. Nothing is good for the body but what we can digest. What medicine can procure digestion? Exercise. What will recruit strength? Sleep. What will alleviate incurable evils? Patience.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CORN FLOUR.—DELICIOUS FRUIT PIE RECIPE.—Bake or stew the fruit in sugar; put it in a pie dish adding a very little flavouring. Take a quart of milk, four ounces of Johnston's Corn Flour, two ounces of powdered sugar; boil it for eight minutes, stir whilst boiling, then pour it over the fruit, and bake for half-an-hour.

CRUMPETS.—To a quart of warm milk and water add a tablespoonful of good yeast and two eggs well beaten; mix with these by degrees as much flour as will make a thick batter, then heat a very small frying-pan, rub it with a little butter and pour in a large spoonful of the batter, which will spread over the pan. Watch the under side by raising it with a fork, and when brown turn it.

ROASTED OYSTERS ON TOAST.—Eighteen large oysters or thirty small ones, one teaspoonful of flour, one teaspoonful of butter, salt, pepper, three slices of toast. Have the toast buttered on a hot dish. Put the butter in a small saucepan, and when hot add the dry flour. Stir until smooth, but not brown; then add the cream, and let it boil up once. Put the oysters (in their own liquor) into a hot oven for three minutes; then add them to the cream. Season, and pour over the toast. Garnish the dish with thin slices of lemon, and serve very hot. It is nice for luncheon or tea.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

MORAL training has yet to be organised and systematised before it can be carried on with efficiency on a large scale, and this will not be done until its importance is more fully felt than at present. It is taken for granted, in a loose kind of way, that a good character will come of itself to most people. No one supposes that knowledge comes of itself, that mental power can be gained without trouble, that a trade or profession should be successfully pursued without previous systematic preparation. Yet all or any of these are more possible than that a character worthy of respect and admiration should spring up without being built, or without either care or knowledge on the part of the builder of the material he uses or the way in which to combine them.

PROGRESS.—All real progress is slow. Sudden jerks give a backward impetus and but little eventual gain. The lessons learned in youth and seemingly forgotten bear fruit in maturity. The struggles to do right that seem so hard and so often ineffective are steadily leading to the state where right-doing is a pleasure. The efforts we make for any worthy object may not seem successful to-day or to-morrow, but they are part of the grand work that is going on slowly but surely, and no one of them can we afford to lose.

SOOTHING.—An hour's sewing soothes a woman's nerves, and exerts the same calming influence that tobacco does with a man. She sews all her little irritations into the seams, imprisons her fancied wrongs into the double, gussets, or slays them in the gore. Mrs. Somerville, a woman of very superior intellect and great culture, wrote in tribute to the soothing powers of a long seam. Madame Dudevant (George Sand), of very different calibre, contributed a similar testimony. Every sensible woman confirms it.

TOLD WITH THE HANDS.—Observe how, when the shrewd palmist is reading the lines of a hand, he scans the face with almost equal interest. These learned people know how the soul dwells in the eye; and the ability to understand its language is shewn with most folks without having to study it, though extremely sensitive persons have told us that more power of discrimination rested in their hands than they could read from every feature of the face, the fingers being so full of vision that they could feel a colour without seeing it; so full of nerves that an impression was instantaneous and could be relied upon; so full of life that when their possessor was in love they tingled with affection.

A GANDER GUIDE.—In Germany an aged blind woman used to be led to church every Sunday by a gander. He would take her to the door of the pew where she sat. As soon as she was in her place he would walk quietly out of the church, and occupy himself in the churchyard, feeding on the grass till the service was over and he heard the people coming out of church. Then he would go to the pew of his old mistress and lead her home again. One day the minister of the church called to see this old person at her own house. He found that she had gone out, and he expressed his surprise to her daughter that they should let her go out alone. "Oh, sir!" replied the daughter, "there is nothing to fear. Mother is not alone; the gander is with her."

HOME.—Nature is industrious in adorning her dominions; and man, to whom this beauty is addressed, should feel and obey the lesson. Let him, too, be industrious in adorning his domain, in making his home—the dwelling of his wife and children—not only convenient and comfortable, but pleasant. Let him, as far as circumstances will admit, be industrious in surrounding it with pleasant objects—in decorating it, within and without, with things that tend to make it agreeable and attractive.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. B.—March 4, 1863, came on Tuesday.  
 HOBBSQUARD.—1. Dark brown. 2. Handwriting fair.  
 A. K.—We can find no book with the title stated.  
 M. R.—The longest verse in the Bible is the ninth verse of the eighth chapter of Esther.  
 FARRING.—1. Hair, very dark brown. 2. Handwriting good, but masculine.  
 G. W. F.—We do not know the address of any parties engaged in the business. It is a very precarious one.  
 G. P. L.—We cannot recommend any particular dealer.  
 C. W. R.—Kilkenny Castle is in Kilkenny, Leinster, Ireland. It dates from the twelfth century.  
 J. W. J.—Your ideas are crudely expressed. You need experience to be able to write successfully for the press.  
 B. S.—We know of no bleaching process that is not injurious to the hair.  
 L. M.—In this country there is separation for any period does not constitute a valid ground for divorce.  
 M. W. N. A.—There is nothing allowed on that account.  
 JOSEPHINE.—Certainly not. Tea indulged in to great excess is liable to lead to nervousness.  
 WILD ROSE.—1. Seal the tips of the stalks of the flowers with sealing-wax. 2. All depends on what passed between yourself and your lover.  
 M. A. J.—It would belong to the owner if for the purposes of the ship; if for private loans, &c., to the crew it would be her husband's private property.  
 ROSE KATE.—1. No cure that we know of. 2. Not if he is an intimate acquaintance. 3. There is no remedy but plenty of exercise and keeping up your spirits.  
 DAISY.—If you cease flirting probably your beau will return to you. When he comes again endeavour to become reconciled and engaged to him.  
 E. C. W.—Invest your spare money in Government securities. We cannot vouch for the reliability of any company.  
 CORAL.—It is indiscreet in a young lady to permit familiarity. A lady, if she desires a gentleman's company, should invite him to call again whenever he takes leave of her.  
 ELVIE.—Under such circumstances you should act with deliberation. Take plenty of time to think the matter over, else you may marry in haste to repent at leisure.  
 M. G. W.—You must decide for yourself. Consult a good lawyer. We cannot give legal advice on such a matter without full knowledge of all the facts and circumstances.  
 R. N. F.—You will soon get over this stage of girlhood, and cease to be annoyed by such little fun as your youngest brother enjoys making of you. You are too young yet to be thinking seriously of beans and marriage. Be patient, and your time will come.  
 CARRIE G. A.—You acted very hastily in writing and releasing your betrothed from his engagement, without a full and sincere explanation of the differences between you. Now you can only wait for him to seek you and offer some reason for his strange behaviour, and beg to be taken back. You cannot sue to him. You write very nicely.  
 MAIRIE.—We do not think that the young lady will better her position by entering upon a public contest. It is a very trying and unpleasant ordeal, and the result in any case would be damaging to all parties concerned. She had far better turn her back upon the man who has disappointed her and live an independent life.  
 N. R. T.—The "King-maker" was a title popularly conferred upon Richard Nevill, Earl of Warwick, who was chiefly instrumental in deposing King Henry VI., and raising the Duke of York to the throne as Edward IV., and who afterwards put Edward to flight and restored the crown to Henry.  
 R. P. P.—It has been stated that roller or wheel-skates were invented indirectly by Meyerbeer, the great musical composer. The story runs that while "Le Prophète" was in rehearsal in Paris, Meyerbeer mentioned to the manager that he had been desirous of introducing a skating scene in the second act, but not deeming it practicable had not proposed it. The manager wishing to oblige the composer revivified the idea in his mind, and finally conceived the notion of skates mounted on wheels. The conception was immediately put into practice, and in due time the entire ballet company appeared on wheels.  
 G. W. F.—Wood impregnated with creosote oil has been found to resist effectually the ravages of worms. In Germany chloride of zinc is used for this purpose, the wood being placed in boilers partly exhausted of air, and the vapour of chlorine thus driven into it. The chief objection to the use of chemicals is their cost. It is said that wood steeped in a solution of copperas becomes comparatively indestructible. A simple way of using chloride of zinc is to mix five pounds of it with every twenty-five gallons of water required, and steep the wood in the solution. In the East Indies the juice of aloes is employed as a varnish to preserve wood from worms and other insects.

W. F.—England and Scotland had separate Parliaments until 1707, when both kingdoms were united under the general name of the "Kingdom of Great Britain."

EVESHAM.—If the wife and children become chargeable to the parish the parish authorities will follow him and compel him to maintain them. 2. Paint the bunions with tincture of iodine twice a-day. 3. Consult your commanding officer.

A. M.—Perhaps the French method of administering castor oil to children would suit you. It is to pour the oil into a pan over a moderate fire, break an egg into it, and stir up; when it is done, flavour with a little salt or sugar, or currant jelly. This makes it palatable.

B. D.—1. Your acceptance of the gentleman's invitation to attend the lecture was a condonation of the neglect of which you complain. You did right not to refer to it. 2. You should have invited him to call as usual. 3. Handwriting and composition both good.

P. T. B.—Forks were used, it is said, on the continent of Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Two-pronged forks were made in Sheffield in the year 1600. Three-pronged forks are much more recent. Silver forks came into use in England about 1814.

R. M.—1. Critics differ very widely upon the subject of your several queries; and, after all, it is only a matter of opinion. Yours is just as good as anybody's. 2. The Grecian type of beauty seems to have been most admired. 3. Yes.

DICK W.—The probable reason why the young lady is so shy in her treatment of you is that she cares more for you than for anybody else, and is therefore more fearful of not behaving just right in your presence. That is often the case with inexperienced girls. If you should tell her that you love her it would probably put her at her ease, and cause her to treat you with satisfactory cordiality.

## FRIENDSHIP'S SWEETS.

Where love hath made two hearts to be  
 As one in thought and feeling,  
 It laughs at friendship merrily,  
 Its triumph all concealing.  
 But we shall always know the sweets  
 That from this fount are flowing—  
 This source where all of pleasure meets  
 That's worth, just now, our knowing.

Fair friendship is not "but a name,"  
 'Tis something nobler, higher;  
 For true hearts, welding in its flame,  
 To love are brought the nigher.  
 The tie, linked firmly, never parts,  
 Nor days nor years seem longer;  
 Between all fond and faithful hearts,  
 With time it grows the stronger.

For me, sweet friend, its fervent glow  
 Crowns all with peace and pleasure,  
 And naught but love itself, I know,  
 Could all up now the measure.  
 Then call not friendship "but a dream,"  
 That cometh to deceive us;  
 Its dear delights are what they seem,  
 And never more should leave us.

D. B. W.

A. G. C.—A gentleman should be attentive and respectful to ladies upon all occasions. He should not leave a lady and neglect his duty when acting as her escort, even if he meets another lady to whom he is more devoted.

L. S. L.—"The Bells of Shandon" is the title of a poem by Francis Mahony ("Father Prout"). It has reference to a fine peal of bells in one of the Catholic churches in Cork (St. Anne's, Shandon). 2. Your handwriting for a girl of eleven years of age is remarkably good.

S. T. P.—1. You will find a book on etiquette of great service to you. 2. Castor oil and brandy will help the hair, if anything will. 3. You are too young to think of keeping company with a mere youth. It will be time enough three or four years hence to think of marriage. 4. A very simple form of invitation is the following:—"I shall be pleased to have you call at our house this evening to meet a number of friends."

G. C. R.—Fruit stains can be immediately removed from the hands by dipping them in warm water, and then rubbing on the stains a small portion of oxalic acid powder and cream of tartar mixed together in equal quantities, and kept in a box. When the stains disappear, wash the hands with fine soap. This mixture being poisonous must be kept out of the reach of children. A few drops of oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid) will also remove most stains from the hands without injuring them. Care must, however, be taken not to drop it upon the clothes. It will remove the colour from woollen, and eat holes in cotton fabrics. The juice of ripe tomatoes will remove the stain of walnuts, &c., from the hands without injury to the skin.

N. C. S.—Mars-la-Tour is a village of France, thirteen miles west of Metz, on the road to Verdun and Paris. It is celebrated for a battle fought there and at Vionville on August 16, 1870, in which Prince Frederick Charles achieved a strategical victory over Bazaine, who by this defeat was prevented from leaving Metz. The fighting on both sides was very obstinate and the losses very large, the French losing 879 officers and 16,128 men, and the Germans 640 officers and 15,170 men. The greater part of the battle-field is in the territory ceded to Germany, the new boundary line being in the immediate vicinity of the French village.

F. P. F.—F in father is not capitalised unless it be a sentence, or is used synonymously with Deity.

S. B. O.—The livre, the ancient French coin to which you refer, appeared as early as 810 A.D. As the French revolution the franc was substituted for the livre.

R. G. F.—You are too young to judge for yourself, and should be governed by the advice and wishes of your parents in this matter. It will be much to your credit to yield to them.

D. S. M.—We can only aid you by advising you to be regular in your habits, to take outdoor exercise daily, and to avoid the use of food containing much starch or sugar.

C. C. D.—You had better trust to your parents in this matter. You are too young to judge of what is best. Do not marry at all until you are fully aware of your own true sentiments. After accepting a suitor you should not permit your fancy to be captivated by another.

W. M.—1. It is customary in introductions to present the youngest person to the oldest. 2. Young ladies are generally fertile in expedients. You can get rid of your unwelcome escort, we think, if you try. 3. Your handwriting is very pretty, but it is not of the right form for a copyist.

C. J. C.—Albion is the appellation by which Great Britain was originally known to the Greeks and Romans. It is a Celtic word, meaning high island or mountain land, and was probably applied originally to the northern part, embracing the Scottish highlands. The root of the word is thus the same as that of the word Alps. The derivation from the Latin *albus*, white, is now rejected by the best critics.

P. T. K.—The Bank of England was opened for business on Jan. 1, 1696. It immediately issued notes, none of which were, however, of smaller denomination than £20. On Feb. 27, 1797, the bank suspended specie payments, and then notes of the denomination of £1 were prepared and issued. The resumption of payments in coin took place on May 1, 1823.

E. G. F.—Cracks in floors, around the mould board or other parts of a room may be neatly and permanently filled by thoroughly soaking newspapers in paste made of one pound of flour, three quarts of water, and a tablespoonful of alum thoroughly boiled and mixed. The mixture will be about as thick as putty, and may be forced into the cracks with a paste-knife. It will harden like papier-mâché.

X. W. V.—This disposition on the part of your betrothed to find fault is likely to seriously affect the happiness and prosperity of your married life, and you should have a serious talk with her about it. If she does not endeavour to cure herself of this fault, you had better postpone the marriage. If you are sufficiently serious you will be able to show the young lady the great danger of allowing this habit to grow upon her.

LITTLE SUFFERER.—The *Lancet* condemns the practice of giving and taking such depressing narcotics as chloral and bromide of potassium as a remedy for sleeplessness as mischievous and wholly indefensible. It is as clumsy in theory as knocking a man down because he needs rest; and yet, as by common consent, this eminent authority states the profession sanctions the abuse of such drugs as "poisoned sleep" producers. There are more than a score and a half of known causes or forms of sleeplessness, each one requiring direct and specific treatment.

A. M. W.—The meaning of Halloween is simply Hallow evening. It comes on the evening—October 31st—that precedes All Saints' Day, which is also called All Hallowes, whence the word Halloween. It has long been a superstition that various love spells have more power at midnight on Halloween than at any other time. It is alleged that if a girl walks backwards at that hour from her house to a running brook, and then turns suddenly and looks in the stream that she will see the face of her future husband looking up at her from the crystal stream. Hence the old poetical saying—

"Halloween, O Halloween,  
 On this blessed night,  
 Show to me my sweetheart dear  
 In the water bright."

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